

T H E
W O R K S

Of the late RIGHT HONORABLE

H E N R Y S T. J O H N,

L O R D V I S C O U N T B O L I N G B R O K E.

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THE

W O R K S

OF THE RIGHT HONORABLE

HENRY ST. JOHN,

LODGE VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

VOL. III.



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C O N T E N T S

1. Introduction

2. The first part of the book is devoted to a description of the various methods of determining the position of a point on the surface of the earth. It is divided into three chapters: the first on the subject of the determination of the position of a point on the surface of the earth by means of the observation of the stars; the second on the subject of the determination of the position of a point on the surface of the earth by means of the observation of the sun; and the third on the subject of the determination of the position of a point on the surface of the earth by means of the observation of the moon.

3. The second part of the book is devoted to a description of the various methods of determining the position of a point on the surface of the earth. It is divided into three chapters: the first on the subject of the determination of the position of a point on the surface of the earth by means of the observation of the stars; the second on the subject of the determination of the position of a point on the surface of the earth by means of the observation of the sun; and the third on the subject of the determination of the position of a point on the surface of the earth by means of the observation of the moon.

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A
L E T T E R
ON THE
S P I R I T
O F
P A T R I O T I S M.

Vol. III.

A

LETTER

ON THE

SPIRIT

PATRISTICAL

VOL. III

ON THE
SPIRIT
OF
PATRIOTISM.

My LORD,

1736.

YOU have engaged me on a subject, which interrupts the series of those letters I was writing to you; but it is one, which, I confess, I have very much at heart. I shall therefore explain myself fully, nor blush to reason on principles that are out of fashion among men, who intend nothing by serving the public, but to feed their avarice, their vanity, and their luxury, without the sense of any duty they owe to God or man.

It seems to me, that in order to maintain the moral system of the world at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining; but, however, sufficient upon the whole to constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst

tolerable : I say, it seems to me, that the Author of nature has thought fit to mingle, from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of the ethereal spirit, than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men. These are they who engross almost the whole reason of the species ; who are born to instruct, to guide, and to preserve : who are designed to be the tutors and the guardians of human kind. When they prove such, they exhibit to us examples of the highest virtue, and the truest piety : and they deserve to have their festivals kept, instead of that pack of anachorites and enthusiasts, with whose names the kalendar is crowded and disgraced. When these men apply their talents to other purposes, when they strive to be great, and despise being good, they commit a most sacrilegious breach of trust ; they pervert the means, they defeat, as far as lies in them, the designs of providence, and disturb, in some sort, the system of infinite wisdom. To misapply these talents is the most diffused, and, therefore, the greatest of crimes in it's nature and consequences ; but to keep them unexerted, and unemployed, is a crime too. Look about you, my lord, from the palace to the cottage ; you will find that the bulk of mankind is made to breathe the air of this atmosphere ; to roam about this globe, and to consume, like the courtiers of AL-
CINOUS, the fruits of the earth. *Nos numerus fumus, et fruges consumere nati.* When they have trod this insipid round a certain number of years, and begot others to do the same after them, they have lived : and if they have performed, in some tolerable degree, the ordinary moral duties of life, they have done all they were born to do. Look about you again, my lord, nay look into your own breast, and you will find that there are superior spirits, men who shew even from their infancy, tho' it be not always perceived by others, per-
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haps not always felt by themselves, that they were born for something more, and better. These are the men to whom the part I mentioned is assigned. Their talents denote their general designation: and the opportunities of conforming themselves to it, that arise in the course of things, or that are presented to them by any circumstances of rank and situation in the society to which they belong, denote the particular vocation, which it is not lawful for them to resist, nor even to neglect. The duration of the lives of such men as these is to be determined, I think, by the length and importance of the parts they act, not by the number of years that pass between their coming into the world, and their going out of it. Whether the piece be of three, or five acts, the part may be long: and he, who sustains it thro' the whole, may be said to die in the fulness of years; whilst he, who declines it sooner, may be said not to live out half his days.

I HAVE sometimes represented to myself the vulgar, who are accidentally distinguished by the titles of king and subject, of lord and vassal, of nobleman and peasant; and the few, who are distinguished by nature so essentially from the herd of mankind, that, figure apart, they seem to be of another species, in this manner: the former come into the world, and continue in it, like German travellers in a foreign country. Every thing they meet has the grace of novelty; and they are fond alike of every thing that is new. They wander about from one object, to another, of vain curiosity, or inelegant pleasure. If they are industrious, they shew their industry in copying signs, and collecting mottos and epitaphs. They loiter, or they trifle away their whole time: and their presence or their absence would be equally unperceived, if caprice or accident did not raise them often to stations, wherein their stupidity, their vices, or their follies, make them a public misfortune.

fortune. The latter come into the world, or at least continue in it after the effects of surprize and inexperience are over, like men who are sent on more important errands. They observe with distinction, they admire with knowledge. They may indulge themselves in pleasure; but as their industry is not employed about trifles, so their amusements are not made the business of their lives. Such men cannot pass unperceived thro' a country. If they retire from the world, their splendor accompanies them, and enlightens even the obscurity of their retreat. If they take a part in public life, the effect is never indifferent. They either appear like ministers of divine vengeance, and their course thro' the world is marked by desolation and oppression, by poverty and servitude: or they are the guardian angels of the country they inhabit, busy to avert even the most distant evil, and to maintain or to procure peace, plenty, and, the greatest of human blessings, liberty.

FROM the observation, that superiority of parts is often employed to do superior mischief, no consequence can be drawn against the truth I endeavor to establish. Reason collects the will of God from the constitution of things, in this as in other cases; but in no case does the Divine power impel us necessarily to conform ourselves to this will: and therefore, from the misapplication of superior parts to the hurt, no argument can be drawn against this position, that they were given for the good, of mankind. Reason deceives us not: we deceive ourselves, and suffer our wills to be determined by other motives. MONTAGNE or CHARRON would say, *l'homme se pipe*, "man is at once his own sharper, and his "own bubble." Human nature is her own bawd, says TULLY, *blanda conciliatrix, et quasi lena fui*. He who considers the universal wants, imperfections, and vices of his kind, must agree that men were intended not only for society, but to
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unite in commonwealths, and to submit to laws : *legum idcirco omnes servi sumus, ut liberi esse possimus*. And yet this very man will be seduced by his own passions, or the passions and examples of others, to think, or to act as if he thought, the very contrary. So he who is conscious of superior endowments, such as render him more capable, than the generality of men, to secure and improve the advantages of social life, by preserving the commonwealth in strength and splendor, even he may be seduced to think, or to act as if he thought, that these endowments were given him for the gratification of his ambition, and his other passions ; and that there is no difference between vice and virtue, between a knave and an honest man, but one, which a prince, who died not many years ago, asserted, “ that men of great sense were, “ therefore, knaves, and men of little sense were, therefore, “ honest.” But in neither of these cases will the truth and reason of things be altered, by such examples of human frailty. It will be still true, and reason will still demonstrate, that all men are directed, by the general constitution of human nature, to submit to government, and that some men are in a particular manner designed to take care of that government on which the common happiness depends. The use that reason will make of such examples, will be only this, that since men are so apt, in every form of life and every degree of understanding, to act against their interest and their duty too, without benevolence to mankind, or regard to the divine will ; it is the more incumbent on those who have this benevolence and this regard at heart, to employ all the means that the nature of the government allows, and that rank, circumstances of situation, or superiority of talents, give them, to oppose evil, and promote good government ; and contribute thus to preserve the moral system of the world at that point of perfection at least, which seems to have been prescribed to it by the great Creator of every system of beings.

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GIVE me leave, now, my lord, to cast my eyes for a moment homeward, and to apply what I have been saying to the present state of Britain. That there is no profusion of the ethereal spirit to be observed among us, and that we do not abound with men of superior genius, I am ready to confess; but, I think there is no ground for the complaints I have heard made, as if nature had not done her part in our age, as well as in former ages, by producing men capable of serving the commonwealth. The manners of our forefathers were, I believe, in many respects better: they had more probity perhaps, they had certainly more show of honor, and greater industry. But still nature sows alike, though we do not reap alike. There are, and as there always have been, there always will be, such creatures in government as I have described above. Fortune maintains a kind of rivalry with wisdom, and piques herself often in favor of fools as well as knaves. SOCRATES used to say, that altho' no man undertakes a trade he has not learned, even the meanest; yet every one thinks himself sufficiently qualified for the hardest of all trades, that of government. He said this upon the experience he had in Greece. He would not change his opinion if he lived now in Britain. But, however, such characters as these would do little hurt, generally speaking, or would not do it long, if they stood alone. To do great hurt, some genius, some knowledge, some talents in short, natural or acquired, are necessary: less indeed, far less than are required to do good, but always some. Yet, I imagine, not the worst minister could do all the mischief he does, by the misapplication of his talents alone, if it were not for the misapplication of much better talents than his, by some who join with him, and the non-application, or the faint and unsteady exercise of their talents by some who oppose him, as well as the general remissness of mankind in acquiring

acquiring knowledge, and improving the parts which God has given them, for the service of the public. These are the great springs of national misfortunes. There have been monsters in other ages, and other countries, as well as ours; but they never continued their devastations long, when there were heroes to oppose them. We will suppose a man imprudent, rash, presumptuous, ungracious, insolent, and profligate in speculation as well as practice. He can bribe, but he cannot seduce: he can buy, but he cannot gain: he can lye, but he cannot deceive. From whence then has such a man his strength? from the general corruption of the people, nursed up to a full maturity under his administration; from the venality of all orders and all ranks of men, some of whom are so prostitute, that they set themselves to sale, and even prevent application. This would be the answer, and it would be a true one as far as it goes; but it does not account for the whole. Corruption could not spread with so much success, tho' reduced into system, and tho' some ministers, with equal impudence and folly, avowed it, by themselves and their advocates, to be the principal expedient by which they governed, if a long and almost unobserved progression of causes and effects did not prepare the conjuncture. Let me explain it, and apply it, as I conceive it. One party had given their whole attention, during several years, to the project of enriching themselves, and impoverishing the rest of the nation, and, by these and other means, of establishing their dominion under the government and with the favor of a family, who were foreigners, and therefore might believe, that they were established on the throne by the good-will and strength of this party alone. This party in general were so intent on these views, and many of them, I fear, are so still, that they did not advert in time to the necessary consequences of the measures they abetted: nor did they consider, that the power they raised, and by which they hoped to govern their country, would govern them with the very rod of iron

they forged, and would be the power of a prince or minister, not that of a party long. Another party continued sour, fullen, and inactive, with judgments so weak, and passions so strong, that even experience, and a severe one surely, was lost upon them. They waited, like the Jews, for a MESSIAH, that may never come; and under whom, if he did come, they would be strangely disappointed in their expectations of glory and triumph, and universal dominion. Whilst they waited, they were marked out like the Jews, a distinct race, hewers of wood and drawers of water, scarce members of the community, tho' born in the country. All indifferent men stood as it were at a gaze: and the few who were jealous of the court, were still more jealous of one another; so that a strength sufficient to oppose bad ministers was not easy to be formed. When this strength was formed, and the insufficiency or iniquity of the administration was daily exposed to public view, many adhered at first to the minister, and others were since gained to his cause, because they knew nothing of the constitution of their own, nor of the history of other countries; but imagined wildly, that things always went as they saw them go, and that liberty has been, and therefore may be, preserved, under the influence of the same corruption. Others perhaps were weak enough to be frightened at first, as some are hypocritical enough to pretend to be still, with the appellations of Tory and Jacobite, which are always ridiculously given to every man who does not bow to the brazen image that the king has set up. Others again might be persuaded, that no fatal use at least would be made of the power acquired by corruption: and men of superior parts might and may still flatter themselves, that if this power should be so employed, they shall have time and means to stop the effects of it. The first of these are seduced by their ignorance and futility; the second, if they are not hypocrites, by their prejudices; the third, by their partiality and blind confidence;

fidence; the last by their presumption; and all of them by the mammon of unrighteousness, their private interest, which they endeavor to palliate and to reconcile as well as they can to that of the public: *et cæca cupiditate corrupti, non intelligunt se, dum vendunt, et venire.*

ACCORDING to this representation, which I take to be true, your Lordship will agree that our unfortunate country affords an example in proof of what is asserted above. The German travellers I spoke of, men of the ordinary or below the ordinary size of understanding, tho' they are called by caprice, or lifted any other way into power, cannot do great and long mischief, in a country of liberty; unless men of genius, knowledge, and experience, misapply these talents, and become their leaders. A ministerial faction would have as little ability to do hurt, as they have inclination to do good, if they were not formed and conducted by one of better parts than they; nor would such a minister be able to support, at the head of this trusty phalanx, the ignominious tyranny imposed on his country, if other men, of better parts and much more consequence than himself, were not drawn in to misapply these parts to the vilest drudgery imaginable; the daily drudgery of explaining nonsense, covering ignorance, disguising folly, concealing and even justifying fraud and corruption: instead of employing their knowledge, their elocution, their skill, experience, and authority, to correct the administration and to guard the constitution. But this is not all: the example shews a great deal more. Your Lordship's experience, as well as mine, will justify what I am going to say. It shews further, that such a conjuncture could not be rendered effectual to preserve power in some of the weakest and some of the worst hands in the kingdom, if there was not a non-application, or a

faint and unsteady exercise of parts on one side, as well as an iniquitous misapplication of them on the other : and I cannot help saying, let it fall where it will, what I have said perhaps already, that the former is a crime but one degree inferior to the latter. The more genius, industry, and spirit are employed to destroy, the harder the task of saving our country becomes ; but the duty increases with the difficulty, if the principles on which I reason are true. In such exigences it is not enough that genius be opposed to genius ; spirit must be matched by spirit. They, who go about to destroy, are animated from the first by ambition and avarice, the love of power and of money : fear makes them often desperate at last. They must be opposed, therefore, or they will be opposed in vain, by a spirit able to cope with ambition, avarice, and despair itself ; by a spirit able to cope with these passions, when they are favored and fortified by the weakness of a nation, and the strength of a government. In such exigences there is little difference, as to the merit or the effect, between opposing faintly and unsteadily, and not opposing at all : nay the former may be of worse consequence, in certain circumstances, than the latter. And this is a truth I wish with all my heart you may not see verified in our country, where many, I fear, undertake opposition not as a duty, but as an adventure : and looking on themselves like volunteers, not like men listed in the service, they deem themselves at liberty to take as much or as little of this trouble, and to continue in it as long, or end it as soon, as they please. It is but a few years ago that not the merchants alone, but the whole nation took fire at the project of new excises. The project was opposed not on mercantile considerations and interests alone, but on the true principles of liberty. In parliament, the opposition was strenuously enough supported for a time ; but there was so little disposition to guide and improve the spirit, that

that the chief concern of those who took the lead seemed applied to keep it down : and yet your Lordship remembers how high it continued against the projector, till it was calmed just before the elections of the present parliament, by the remarkable indolence and inactivity of the last session of the last. But these friends of ours, my Lord, are as much mistaken in their ethics, as the event will shew they have been in their politics.

THE service of our country is no chimerical, but a real duty. He who admits the proofs of any other moral duty, drawn from the constitution of human nature, or from the moral fitness and unfitness of things, must admit them in favor of this duty, or be reduced to the most absurd inconsistency. When he has once admitted the duty on these proofs, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate to him, that his obligation to the performance of it is in proportion to the means and the opportunities he has of performing it ; and that nothing can discharge him from this obligation as long as he has these means and these opportunities in his power, and as long as his country continues in the same want of his services. These obligations, then, to the public service may become obligations for life on certain persons. No doubt they may : and shall this consideration become a reason for denying or evading them ? On the contrary, sure it should become a reason for acknowledging and fulfilling them, with the greatest gratitude to the Supreme Being, who has made us capable of acting so excellent a part, and with the utmost benevolence to mankind. Superior talents, and superior rank amongst our fellow-creatures, whether acquired by birth, or by the course of accidents, and the success of our own industry, are noble prerogatives. Shall he, who possesses them, repine at the obligation they lay him under, of passing his whole life in the noblest occupation of which human nature is capable ? To what higher station,

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to what greater glory can any mortal aspire, than to be, during the whole course of his life, the support of good, the controul of bad government, and the guardian of public liberty? To be driven from hence by successful tyranny, by loss of health or of parts, or by the force of accidents, is to be degraded in such a manner as to deserve pity, and not to incur blame; but to degrade ourselves, to descend voluntarily, and by choice, from the highest to a lower, perhaps to the lowest rank among the sons of ADAM; to abandon the government of men for that of hounds and horses, the care of a kingdom for that of a parish, and a scene of great and generous efforts in public life, for one of trifling amusements and low cares, of sloth and of idleness, what is it, my Lord? I had rather your Lordship should name it than I. Will it be said that it is hard to exact from some men, in favor of others, that they should renounce all the pleasures of life, and drudge all their days in business, that others may indulge themselves in ease? it will be said without grounds. A life dedicated to the service of our country admits the full use, and no life should admit the abuse of pleasures: the least are consistent with a constant discharge of our public duty, the greatest arise from it. The common, the sensual pleasures to which nature prompts us, and which reason therefore does not forbid, tho' she should always direct, are so far from being excluded out of a life of business, that they are sometimes necessary in it, and are always heightened by it: those of the table, for instance, may be ordered so as to promote that which the elder CATO calls *vitæ conjunctionem*. In the midst of public duties, private studies, and an extreme old age, he found time to frequent the sodalitates, or clubs of friends, at Rome, and to sit up all night with his neighbors in the country of the Sabines. CATO's virtue often glowed with wine: and the love of women did not hinder CÆSAR from forming and executing the
greatest

greatest projects that ambition ever suggested. But if CÆSAR, whilst he labored to destroy the liberties of his country, enjoyed these inferior pleasures of life, which a man who labors to save those liberties may enjoy as well as he; there are superior pleasures in a busy life, that CÆSAR never knew; those, I mean, that arise from a faithful discharge of our duty to the commonwealth. Neither MONTAIGNE in writing his essays, nor DES CARTES in building new worlds, nor BURNET in framing an antediluvian earth, no, nor NEWTON in discovering and establishing the true laws of nature on experiment and a sublimer geometry, felt more intellectual joys, than he feels who is a real patriot, who bends all the force of his understanding, and directs all his thoughts and actions, to the good of his country. When such a man forms a political scheme, and adjusts various and seemingly independent parts in it to one great and good design, he is transported by imagination, or absorbed in meditation, as much and as agreeably as they: and the satisfaction that arises from the different importance of these objects, in every step of the work, is vastly in his favor. It is here that the speculative philosopher's labor and pleasure end. But he who speculates in order to act, goes on and carries his scheme into execution. His labor continues, it varies, it increases; but so does his pleasure too. The execution indeed is often traversed, by unforeseen and untoward circumstances, by the perverseness or treachery of friends, and by the power or malice of enemies: but the first and the last of these animate, and the docility and fidelity of some men make amends for the perverseness and treachery of others. Whilst a great event is in suspense, the action warms, and the very suspense, made up of hope and fear, maintain no unpleasing agitation in the mind. If the event is decided successfully, such a man enjoys pleasure proportionable to the good he has done; a pleasure like to that which is attributed to the Supreme Being, on a survey of his

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works. If the event is decided otherwise, and usurping courts, or overbearing parties prevail; such a man has still the testimony of his conscience, and a sense of the honor he has acquired, to soothe his mind, and support his courage. For altho' the course of state-affairs be to those who meddle in them like a lottery, yet it is a lottery wherein no good man can be a loser: he may be reviled, it is true, instead of being applauded, and may suffer violence of many kinds. I will not say, like *SENECA*, that the noblest spectacle, which God can behold, is a virtuous man suffering, and struggling with afflictions: but this I will say, that the second *CATO*, driven out of the forum, and dragged to prison, enjoyed more inward pleasure, and maintained more outward dignity, than they who insulted him, and who triumphed in the ruin of their country. But the very example of *CATO* may be urged, perhaps, against what I have insisted upon: it may be asked what good he did to Rome, by dedicating his whole life to her service; what honor to himself, by dying at Utica? It may be said, that governments have their periods, like all things human; that they may be brought back to their primitive principles during a certain time, but that when these principles are worn out in the minds of men, it is a vain enterprise to endeavor to renew them; that this is the case of all governments when the corruption of the people comes to a great pitch, and is grown universal; that when a house which is old and quite decayed, tho' often repaired, not only cracks, but totters even from the foundations, every man in his senses runs out of it, and takes shelter where he can, and that none but madmen continue obstinate to repair what is irreparable, till they are crushed in the ruin; just so, that we must content ourselves to live under the government we like the least, when that form which we like the most is destroyed, or worn out; according to the counsel of *DOLABELLA* in one of his letters to *CICERO*. But, my Lord, if *CATO* could not save, he prolonged the life of liberty: the liberties of
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of Rome would have been lost when CATILINE attacked them, abetted probably by CÆSAR and CRASSUS, and the worst citizens of Rome; and when CICERO defended them, abetted by CATO and the best. That CATO erred in his conduct, by giving way too much to the natural roughness of his temper, and by allowing too little for that of the Romans, among whom luxury had long prevailed, and corruption was openly practised, is most true. He was incapable of employing those seeming compliances that are reconcileable to the greatest steadiness; and treated unskilfully a crazy constitution. The safety of the commonwealth depended, in that critical conjuncture, on a coalition of parties, the senatorian and the equestrian: TULLY had formed it, CATO broke it. But if this good, for I think he was not an able, man erred in the particular respects I have ventured to mention, he deserved most certainly the glory he acquired by the general tenor of his conduct, and by dedicating the whole labor of his life to the service of his country. He would have deserved more, if he had persisted in maintaining the same cause to the end, and would have died, I think, with a better grace at Munda than at Utica. If this be so, if CATO may be censured, severely indeed, but justly, for abandoning the cause of liberty, which he would not, however, survive; what shall we say of those who embrace it faintly, pursue it irresolutely, grow tired of it when they have much to hope, and give it up when they have nothing to fear?

My Lord, I have insisted the more on this duty which men owe to their country, because I came out of England, and continue still strongly affected with what I saw when I was there. Our government has approached nearer, than ever before, to the true principles of it, since the revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight: and the accession of

the present family to the throne has given the fairest opportunities, as well as the justest reasons, for completing the scheme of liberty, and improving it to perfection. But it seems to me, that in our separate world, as the means of asserting and supporting liberty are increased, all concern for it is diminished. I beheld, when I was among you, more abject servility, in the manners and behaviour of particular men, than I ever saw in France, or than has been seen there. I believe, since the days of that Gascon, who, being turned out of the minister's door, leaped in again at his window. As to bodies of men, I dare challenge your lordship, and I am sorry for it, to produce any instances of resistance to the unjust demands, or wanton will of a court, that British parliaments have given, comparable to such as I am able to cite to the honor of the parliament of Paris, and the whole body of the law in that country, within the same compass of time. This abject servility may appear justly the more wonderful in Britain, because the government of Britain has, in some sort, the appearance of an oligarchy: and monarchy is rather hid behind it than shewn, rather weakened than strengthened, rather imposed upon than obeyed. The wonder, therefore, is to observe, how imagination and custom, a giddy fool and a formal pedant, have rendered these cabals, or oligarchies, more respected than majesty itself. That this should happen in countries where princes who have absolute power, may be tyrants themselves, or substitute subordinate tyrants, is not wonderful. It has happened often: but that it should happen in Britain, may be justly an object of wonder. In these countries, the people had lost the armour of their constitution: they were naked and defenceless. Ours is more complete than ever. But tho' we have preserved the armour, we have lost the spirit, of our constitution: and therefore we bear, from little engrossers of delegated power, what our fathers would not have suffered from true proprietors of the royal

royal authority. Parliaments are not only, what they always were, essential parts of our constitution, but essential parts of our administration too. They do not claim the executive power: no; but the executive power cannot be exercised without their annual concurrence. How few months, instead of years, have princes and ministers now to pass, without inspection and control? How easy, therefore, is it become to check every growing evil in the bud; to change every bad administration, to keep such farmers of government in awe; to maintain, and revenge, if need be, the constitution? It is become so easy, by the present form of our government, that corruption alone could not destroy us. We must want spirit, as well as virtue, to perish. Even able knaves would preserve liberty in such circumstances as ours, and highwaymen would scorn to receive the wages, and do the drudgery of pick-pockets. But all is little, and low, and mean among us! Far from having the virtues, we have not even the vices, of great men. He who had pride instead of vanity, and ambition but equal to his desire of wealth, could never bear, I do not say, to be the under-strapper to any farmer of royal authority, but to see patiently one of them, at best his fellow, perhaps his inferior in every respect, lord it over him, and the rest of mankind, dissipating the wealth, and trampling on the liberties of his country, with impunity. This could not happen, if there was the least spirit among us. But there is none. What passes among us for ambition, is an odd mixture of avarice and vanity: the moderation we have seen practised, is pusillanimity, and the philosophy that some men affect, is sloth. Hence it comes that corruption has spread, and prevails.

I EXPECT little from the principal actors that tread the stage at present. They are divided, not so much as it has seemed, and as they would have it believed, about measures: the true

division is about their different ends. Whilst the minister was not hard pushed, nor the prospect of succeeding to him near, they appeared to have but one end, the reformation of the government. The destruction of the minister was pursued only as a preliminary, but of essential and indispensable necessity to that end. But when his destruction seemed to approach, the object of his succession interposed to the sight of many, and the reformation of the government was no longer their point of view. They divided the skin, at least in their thoughts, before they had taken the beast: and the common fear of hunting him down for others, made them all faint in the chace. It was this, and this alone, that has saved him, or has put off his evil day. Corruption, so much, and so justly complained of, could not have done it alone.

WHEN I say that I expect little from the principal actors that tread the stage at present, I am far from applying to all of them what I take to be true of the far greatest part. There are men among them who certainly intend the good of their country, and whom I love and honor for that reason. But these men have been clogged, or misled, or over-borne by others; and, seduced by natural temper to inactivity, have taken any excuse, or yielded to any pretence that favored it. That they should rouse, therefore, in themselves, or in any one else, the spirit they have suffered, nay, helped to die away, I do not expect. I turn my eyes from the generation that is going off, to the generation that is coming on the stage. I expect good from them, and from none of them more than from you, my lord. Remember, that the opposition, in which you have engaged at your first entrance into business, is not an opposition only to a bad administration of public affairs, but to an administration that supports itself by means, establishes principles, introduces customs, repugnant to the constitution.

constitution of our government, and destructive of all liberty; that you do not only combat present evils, but attempts to intail these evils upon you and your posterity; that if you cease the combat, you give up the cause; and that he, who does not renew, on every occasion, his claim, may forfeit his right.

OUR disputes were formerly, to say the truth, much more about persons than things; or, at most, about particular points of political conduct, in which we should have soon agreed, if persons and personal interests had been less concerned, and the blind prejudice of party less prevalent. Whether the Big-endians, or the Little-endians got the better, I believe, no man of sense and knowledge thought the constitution concerned; notwithstanding all the clamor raised at one time about the danger of the church, and at another time about the danger of the protestant succession. But the case is, at this time, vastly altered. The means of invading liberty more effectually by the constitution of the revenue, than it ever had been invaded by prerogative, were not then grown up into strength. They are so now: and a bold and an insolent use is made of them. To reform the state, therefore, is, and ought to be, the object of your opposition, as well as to reform the administration. Why do I say as well? It is so, and it ought to be so, much more. Wrest the power of the government, if you can, out of hands that have employed it weakly and wickedly, ever since it was thrown into them by a silly bargain made in one reign, and a corrupt bargain made in another. But do not imagine this to be your sole, or your principal, business. You owe to your country, to your honor, to your security, to the present, and to future ages, that no endeavors of yours be wanting to repair the breach that is made, and is increasing daily in the constitution; and to shut up, with all the bars and bolts

bolts of law, the principal entries thro' which these torrents of corruption have been let in upon us. I say, the principal entries; because, however it may appear in pure speculation, I think it would not be found in practice possible, no, nor eligible neither, to shut them up all. As entries of corruption none of them deserve to be excepted; but there is a just distinction to be made, because there is a real difference. Some of these entries are opened by the abuse of powers necessary to maintain subordination and to carry on even good government, and therefore necessary to be preserved in the crown, notwithstanding the abuse that is sometimes made of them; for no human institution can arrive at perfection, and the most that human wisdom can do, is to procure the same or greater good, at the expence of less evil. There will be always some evil, either immediate or remote, either in cause or consequence. But there are other entries of corruption, and these are by much the greatest, for suffering of which to continue open, no reason can be assigned, or has been pretended to be assigned, but that which is, to every honest and wise man, a reason for shutting them up; the increase of the means of corruption, which are oftener employed for the service of the oligarchy, than for the service of the monarchy. Shut up these, and you will have nothing to fear from the others. By these, a more real and a more dangerous power has been granted to ministers, than was lost to the crown by the restraints on prerogative.

THERE have been periods when our government continued free, with strong appearances of becoming absolute. Let it be your glory, my lord, and that of the new generation springing up with you, that this government do not become absolute at any future period, with the appearances of being free. However you may be employed, in all your counsels, in all your actions, keep this regard to the constitution
always

always in fight. The scene that opens before you is great, and the part that you will have to act, difficult. It is difficult, indeed, to bring men, from strong habits of corruption, to prefer honor to profit, and liberty to luxury; as it is hard to teach princes the great art of governing all by all, or to prevail on them to practise it. But if it be a difficult, it is a glorious attempt; an attempt, worthy to exert the greatest talents, and to fill the most extended life. Pursue it with courage, my lord, nor despair of success.

Deus hæc fortasse benigna
 Reducet in sedem vice.

A parliament, nay, one house of parliament, is able, at any time, and at once, to destroy any corrupt plan of power. Time produces every day new conjunctures. Be prepared to improve them. We read, in the Old-testament, of a city that might have escaped divine vengeance, if five righteous men had been found in it. Let not our city perish for want of so small a number: and if the generation that is going off could not furnish it, let the generation that is coming on furnish a greater.

We may reasonably hope that it will, from the first essays which your lordship and some others of our young senators have made in public life. You have raised the hopes of your country by the proofs you have given of superior parts. Confirm these hopes by proofs of uncommon industry, application, and perseverance. Superior parts, nay, even superior virtue, without these qualities, will be insufficient to support your character and your cause. How many men have appeared in my time, who have made these essays with success, and have made no progress afterwards? Some have dropped, from their
 first

first flights, down into the vulgar crowd, have been distinguished, nay, heard of no more! others, with better parts, perhaps with more presumption, but certainly with greater ridicule, have persisted in making these essays towards business all their lives, and have never been able to advance farther, in their political course, than a premeditated harangue on some choice subject. I never saw one of these important persons sit down after his oration, with repeated hear-hims ringing in his ears, and inward rapture glowing in his eyes, that he did not recal to my memory the story of a conceited member of some parliament in France, who was over-heard, after his tedious harange, muttering most devoutly to himself, *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo de gloriam!*

ELOQUENCE has charms to lead mankind, and gives a nobler superiority than power, that every dunce may use, or fraud, that every knave may employ. But eloquence must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring, and not spout forth like a frothy water on some gaudy day, and remain dry the rest of the year. The famous orators of Greece and Rome were the statesmen and ministers of those commonwealths. The nature of their governments, and the humor of those ages, made elaborate orations necessary. They harangued oftener than they debated: and the *ars dicendi* required more study and more exercise of mind, and of body too, among them, than are necessary among us. But as much pains as they took in learning how to conduct the stream of eloquence, they took more to enlarge the fountain from which it flowed. Hear DEMOSTHENES, hear CICERO, thunder against PHILIP, CATALINE, and ANTONY. I chuse the example of the first, rather than that of PERICLES, whom he imitated, or of PHOCION, whom he opposed, or of any other considerable personage in Greece: and

and the example of CicerO rather than that of Crassus, or of Hortensius, or of any other of the great men of Rome; because the eloquence of these two has been so celebrated, that we are accustomed to look upon them almost as mere orators. They were orators indeed, and no man who has a soul can read their orations, after the revolution of so many ages, after the extinction of the governments, and of the people for whom they were composed, without feeling, at this hour, the passions they were designed to move, and the spirit they were designed to raise. But if we look into the history of these two men, and consider the parts they acted, we shall see them in another light, and admire them in an higher sphere of action. DEMOSTHENES had been neglected, in his education, by the same tutors who cheated him of his inheritance. CicerO was bred with greater advantage: and PLUTARCH, I think, says, that when he first appeared, the people used to call him, by way of derision, the Greek, and the scholar. But whatever advantage of this kind the latter might have over the former, and to which of them soever you ascribe the superior genius, the progress which both of them made in every part of political knowledge, by their industry and application, was marvellous. CicerO might be a better philosopher, but DEMOSTHENES was no less a statesman: and both of them performed actions, and acquired fame, above the reach of eloquence alone. DEMOSTHENES used to compare eloquence to a weapon, aptly enough; for eloquence, like every other weapon, is of little use to the owner, unless he have the force and the skill to use it. This force and this skill DEMOSTHENES had in an eminent degree. Observe them in one instance among many. It was of mighty importance to PHILIP, to prevent the accession of Thebes to the grand alliance that DEMOSTHENES, at the head of the Athenian commonwealth, formed against the growing power

of the Macedonians. PHILIP had emissaries and his ambassadors on the spot, to oppose to those of Athens, and we may be assured that he neglected none of those arts upon this occasion, that he employed so successfully on others. The struggle was great, but DEMOSTHENES prevailed, and the Thebans engaged in the war against PHILIP. Was it by his eloquence alone that he prevailed, in a divided state, over all the subtilty of intrigue, all the dexterity of negotiation, all the seduction, all the corruption, and all the terror that the ablest and most powerful prince could employ? Was DEMOSTHENES wholly taken up with composing orations, and haranguing the people in this remarkable crisis? He harangued them, no doubt, at Thebes, as well as at Athens, and in the rest of Greece, where all the great resolutions of making alliances, waging war, or concluding peace, were determined in democratical assemblies. But yet haranguing was, no doubt, the least part of his business, and eloquence was neither the sole, nor the principal talent, as the style of writers would induce us to believe, on which his success depended. He must have been master of other arts, subserviently to which his eloquence was employed, and must have had a thorough knowledge of his own state, and of the other states of Greece, of their dispositions, and of their interests relatively to one another, and relatively to their neighbors, to the Persians particularly, with whom he held a correspondence, not much to his honor in appearance, whatever he might intend by it: I say, he must have been master of many other arts, and have possessed an immense fund of knowledge, to make his eloquence in every case successful, and even pertinent or seasonable in some, as well as to direct it, and to furnish it with matter whenever he thought proper to employ this weapon.

LET

LET us consider TULLY on the greatest theatre of the known world, and in the most difficult circumstances. We are better acquainted with him than we are with DEMOSTHENES; for we see him nearer, as it were, and in more different lights. How perfect a knowledge had he acquired of the Roman constitution of government, ecclesiastical and civil; of the original and progress, of the general reasons and particular occasions of the laws and customs of his country; of the great rules of equity, and the low practice of courts; of the duty of every magistracy and office in the state, from the dictator down to the lictor; and of all the steps by which Rome had risen, from her infancy, to liberty, to power, and grandeur, and dominion, as well as of all those by which she began to decline, a little before his age, to that servitude which he died for opposing, but lived to see established, and in which not her liberty alone, but her power, and grandeur, and dominion were lost? How well was he acquainted with the Roman colonies and provinces, with the allies and enemies of the empire, with the rights and privileges of the former, the dispositions and conditions of the latter, with the interests of them all relatively to Rome, and with the interests of Rome relatively to them? How present to his mind were the anecdotes of former times concerning the Roman and other states, and how curious was he to observe the minutest circumstances that passed in his own? His works will answer sufficiently the questions I ask, and establish in the mind of every man who reads them the idea I would give of his capacity and knowledge, as well as that which is so universally taken of his eloquence. To a man fraught with all this stock of knowledge, and industrious to improve it daily, nothing could happen that was entirely new, nothing for which he was quite unprepared, scarce any effect whereof he had not considered the cause,

scarce any cause wherein his sagacity could not discern the latent effect. His eloquence in private causes gave him first credit at Rome : but it was this knowledge, this experience, and the continued habits of business, that supported his reputation, enabled him to do so much service to his country, and gave force and authority to his eloquence. To little purpose would he have attacked CATALINE with all the vehemence that indignation, and even fear, added to eloquence, if he had trusted to this weapon alone. This weapon alone would have secured neither him nor the senate from the poniard of that assassin. - He would have had no occasion to boast, that he had driven this infamous citizen out of the walls of Rome, abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit, if he had not made it, beforehand, impossible for him to continue any longer in them. As little occasion would he have had to assume the honor of defeating, without any tumult, or any disorder, the designs of those who conspired to murder the Roman people, to destroy the Roman empire, and to extinguish the Roman name ; if he had not united, by skill and management, in the common cause of their country, orders of men the most averse to each other ; if he had not watched all the machinations of the conspirators in silence, and prepared a strength sufficient to resist them at Rome, and in the provinces, before he opened this scene of villany to the senate and the people : in a word, if he had not made much more use of political prudence, that is, of the knowledge of mankind, and of the arts of government, which study and experience give, than of all the powers of his eloquence.

SUCH WAS DEMOSTHENES, such was CICERO, such were all the great men whose memories are preserved in history, and such must every man be, or endeavor to be, if he has either sense or sentiment, who presumes to meddle in affairs of government,

vernment, of a free government I mean, and hopes to maintain a distinguished character in popular assemblies, whatever part he takes, whether that of supporting, or that of opposing. I put the two cases purposely, my Lord, because I have observed, and your Lordship will have frequent occasions of observing, many persons who seem to think that opposition to an administration requires fewer preparatives, and less constant application, than the conduct of it. Now, my Lord, I take this to be a gross error, and, I am sure, it has been a fatal one. It is one of those errors, and there are many such, which men impute to judgment, and which proceed from the defect of judgment, as this does from lightness, irresolution, laziness, and a false notion of opposition; unless the persons, who seem to think, do not really think in this manner, but, serving the public purely for interest, and not for fame, nor for duty, decline taking the same pains when they oppose without personal and immediate reward, as they are willing to take when they are paid for serving. Look about you, and you will see men eager to speak, and keen to act, when particular occasions press them, or particular motives excite them, but quite unprepared for either: and hence all that superficiality in speaking, for want of information; hence all that confusion or inactivity, for want of concert; and all that disappointment, for want of preliminary measures. They who affect to head an opposition, or to make any considerable figure in it, must be equal, at least, to those whom they oppose; I do not say, in parts only, but in application and industry, and the fruits of both, information, knowledge, and a certain constant preparedness for all the events that may arise. Every administration is a system of conduct: opposition, therefore, should be a system of conduct likewise; an opposite, but not a dependent system. I shall explain myself better by an example. When two armies take the field,

field, the generals on both sides have their different plans for the campaign, either of defence, or of offence: and as the former does not suspend his measures till he is attacked, but takes them before-hand on every probable contingency, so the latter does not suspend his till the opportunity of attacking presents itself, but is alert, and constantly ready to seize it whenever it happens; and, in the mean time, is busy to improve all the advantages of skill, of force, or of any other kind that he has, or that he can acquire, independently of the plan, and of the motions of his enemy.

IN a word, my Lord, this is my notion, and I submit it to you. According to the present form of our constitution, every member of either house of parliament is a member of a national standing council, born, or appointed by the people, to promote good, and to oppose bad government; and if not vested with the power of a minister of state, yet vested with the superior power of controlling those who are appointed such by the crown. It follows from hence, that they who engage in opposition, are under as great obligations to prepare themselves to control, as they who serve the crown are under to prepare themselves to carry on, the administration: and that a party, formed for this purpose, do not act like good citizens, nor honest men, unless they propose true, as well as oppose false measures of government. Sure I am, they do not act like wise men, unless they act systematically, and unless they contrast, on every occasion, that scheme of policy which the public interest requires to be followed, with that which is suited to no interest but the private interest of the prince, or his ministers. Cunning men (several such there are among you) will dislike this consequence, and object, that such a conduct would support, under the appearance of opposing, a weak, and even a wicked administration; and that to proceed

ceed in this manner, would be to give good counsel to a bad minister, and to extricate him out of distresses that ought to be improved to his ruin. But cunning pays no regard to virtue, and is but the low mimic of wisdom. It were easy to demonstrate what I have asserted concerning the duty of an opposing party: and I presume there is no need of laboring to prove, that a party who opposed, systematically, a wise to a silly, an honest to an iniquitous, scheme of government, would acquire greater reputation and strength, and arrive more surely at their end, than a party who opposed, occasionally as it were, without any common system, without any general concert, with little uniformity, little preparation, little perseverance, and as little knowledge or political capacity. But it is time to leave this invidious subject, and to hasten to the conclusion of my letter before it grows into a book.

I am,

My LORD, &c.

THE
I D E A
O F A
PATRIOT KING.

VOL. III.

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A E D I

P A T R I O T K I N G

W. H. H. B.

THE
I D E A
OF A
PATRIOT KING.

INTRODUCTION.

Dec. 1. 1738.

REVISING some letters I writ to my Lord ***, I found in one of them a great deal said concerning the duties which men owe to their country, those men particularly who live under a free constitution of government; with a strong application of these general doctrines to the present state of Great Britain, and to the characters of the present actors on this stage.

I SAW no reason to alter, none even to soften, any thing that is there advanced. On the contrary, it came into my mind to carry these considerations further, and to delineate, for I pretend not to make a perfect draught, the duties of a king to his country; of those kings particularly who are appointed

by the people, for I know of none who are anointed by God to rule in limited monarchies. After which, I proposed to apply the general doctrines in this case, as strongly and as directly as in the other, to the present state of Great Britain.

I AM not one of those oriental slaves, who deem it unlawful presumption to look their kings in the face; neither am I swayed by my Lord BACON's authority, to think this custom good and reasonable in it's meaning, tho' it favors of barbarism in it's institution: *Ritu quidem barbarus, sed significatione bonus*. Much otherwise. It seems to me, that no secrets are so important to be known, no hearts deserve to be pryed into with more curiosity and attention, than those of princes. But many things have concurred, besides age and temper, to set me at a great distance from the present court. Far from prying into the hearts, I scarce know the faces of our royal family. I shall therefore decline all application to their characters, and all mention of any influence which their characters may have on their own fortune, or on that of this nation.

THE principles I have reasoned upon in my letter to my Lord ***, and those I shall reason upon here, are the same. They are laid in the same system of human nature. They are drawn from that source from whence all the duties of public and private morality must be derived, or they will be often falsely, and always precariously, established. Up to this source there are few men who take the pains to go: and, open as it lies, there are not many who can find their way to it. By such as do, I shall be understood and approved: and, far from fearing the censure, or the ridicule, I should reproach myself with the applause, of men who measure their interest by their passions, and their duty by the examples of a corrupt age; that is, by the examples they afford to one another.

Such,

Such, I think, are the greatest part of the present generation; not of the vulgar alone, but of those who stand foremost, and are raised highest in our nation. Such we may justly apprehend too that the next will be; since they who are to compose it will set out into the world under a direction that must incline them strongly to the same course of self-interest, profligacy, and corruption.

THE iniquity of all the principal men in any community, of kings and ministers especially, does not consist alone in the crimes they commit, and in the immediate consequences of these crimes: and therefore their guilt is not to be measured by these alone. Such men sin against posterity, as well as against their own age: and when the consequences of their crimes are over, the consequences of their example remain. I think, and every wise and honest man in generations yet unborn will think, if the history of this administration descends to blacken our annals, that the greatest iniquity of the minister, on whom the whole iniquity ought to be charged, since he has been so long in possession of the whole power, is the constant endeavor he has employed to corrupt the morals of men. I say thus generally, the morals; because he, who abandons or betrays his country, will abandon or betray his friend; and because he, who is prevailed on to act in parliament without any regard to truth or justice, will easily prevail on himself to act in the same manner every where else. A wiser and honest administration may relieve our trade from that oppression, and the public from that load of debt, under which it must be supposed that he has industriously kept it; because we are able to prove, by fair calculations, that he might have provided effectually for the payment of it, since he came to the head of the treasury. A wiser and honest administration may draw us back to our former credit and influence.

fluence abroad, from that state of contempt into which we are sunk among all our neighbors. But will the minds of men, which this minister has narrowed to personal regards alone, will their views, which he has confined to the present moment, as if nations were mortal like the men who compose them, and Britain was to perish with her degenerate children; will these, I say, be so easily or so soon enlarged? Will their sentiments, which are debased from the love of liberty, from zeal for the honor and prosperity of their country, and from a desire of honest fame, to an absolute unconcernedness for all these, to an abject submission, and to a rapacious eagerness after wealth, that may sate their avarice, and exceed the profusion of their luxury; will these, I say again, be so easily, or so soon elevated? In a word, will the British spirit, that spirit which has preserved liberty hitherto in one corner of the world at least, be so easily or so soon reinfused into the British nation? I think not. We have been long coming to this point of depravation: and the progress from confirmed habits of evil is much more slow than the progress to them. Virtue is not placed on a rugged mountain of difficult and dangerous access, as they who would excuse the indolence of their temper, or the perverseness of their will, desire to have it believed; but she is seated, however, on an eminence. We may go up to her with ease, but we must go up gradually, according to the natural progression of reason, who is to lead the way, and to guide our steps. On the other hand, if we fall from thence, we are sure to be hurried down the hill with a blind impetuosity, according to the natural violence of those appetites and passions that caused our fall at first, and urge it on the faster, the further they are removed from the controul that before restrained them.

To

To perform, therefore, so great a work, as to reinfuse the spirit of liberty, to reform the morals, and to raise the sentiments of a people, much time is required; and a work which requires so much time, may, too probably, be never completed; considering how unsteadily and unsystematically even the best of men are apt often to proceed, and how this reformation is to be carried forward, in opposition to public fashion, and private inclination, to the authority of the men in power, and to the secret bent of many of those who are out of power. Let us not flatter ourselves: I did so too long. It is more to be wished than to be hoped, that the contagion should spread no further than that leprous race, who carry on their skins, exposed to public sight, the scabs and blotches of their distemper. The minister preaches corruption aloud and constantly, like an impudent missionary of vice: and some there are who not only insinuate, but teach the same occasionally. I say, some; because I am as far from thinking, that all those who join with him, as that any of those who oppose him, wait only to be more authorized, that they may propagate it with greater success, and apply it to their own use, in their turn.

It seems to me, upon the whole matter, that to save or redeem a nation, under such circumstances, from perdition, nothing less is necessary than some great, some extraordinary conjuncture of ill fortune, or of good, which may purge, yet so as by fire. Distress from abroad, bankruptcy at home, and other circumstances of like nature and tendency, may beget universal confusion. Out of confusion order may arise: but it may be the order of a wicked tyranny, instead of the order of a just monarchy. Either may happen: and such an alternative, at the disposition of fortune, is sufficient to make a Stoic tremble! We may be saved, indeed, by means of a very different:

ferent kind ; but these means will not offer themselves, this way of salvation will not be opened to us, without the concurrence, and the influence, of a PATRIOT KING, the most uncommon of all phænomena in the physical or moral world.

NOTHING can so surely and so effectually restore the virtue and public spirit essential to the preservation of liberty and national prosperity, as the reign of such a prince.

WE are willing to indulge this pleasing expectation, and there is nothing we desire more ardently than to be able to hold of a British prince, without flattery, the same language that was held of a Roman emperor, with a great deal,

Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.

But let us not neglect, on our part, such means as are in our power, to keep the cause of truth, of reason, of virtue, and of liberty, alive. If the blessing be with-held from us, let us deserve, at least, that it should be granted to us. If heaven, in mercy, bestows it on us, let us prepare to receive it, to improve it, and to co-operate with it.

I SPEAK as if I could take my share in these glorious efforts. Neither shall I recal my words. Stripped of the rights of a British subject, of all except the meanest of them, that of inheriting, I remember that I am a Briton still. I apply to myself what I have read in SENECA, *Officia si civis amiserit, hominis exerceat.* I have renounced the world, not in shew, but in reality, and more by my way of thinking, than by my way of living, as retired as that may seem. But I have not renounced my country, nor my friends : and by my friends I mean all those, and those alone, who are such to their country, by whatever name they have

have been, or may be still distinguished; and tho' in that number there should be men, of whose past ingratitude, injustice, or malice, I might complain, on my own account, with the greatest reason. These I will never renounce. In their prosperity, they shall never hear of me: in their distress, always. In that retreat, wherein the remainder of my days shall be spent, I may be of some use to them; since, even from thence, I may advise, exhort, and warn them. "Nec
" enim is solus reipublicæ prodest, qui candidatos extrahit,
" et tuetur reos, et de pace, belloque censet; sed qui juven-
" tutem exhortatur, qui, in tanta bonorum præceptorum
" inopia, virtute instruit animos; qui ad pecuniam luxuriam-
" que cursu ruentes, prensat ac retrahit, et, si nihil aliud,
" certe moratur; in privato publicum negotium agit."

TO THE READER

THE
IDEA
OF A
PATRIOT KING.

MY intention is not to introduce what I have to say concerning the duties of kings, by any nice inquiry into the original of their institution. What is to be known of it will appear plainly enough, to such as are able and can spare time to trace it, in the broken traditions which are come down to us of a few nations. But those, who are not able to trace it there, may trace something better, and more worthy to be known, in their own thoughts: I mean what this institution ought to have been, whenever it began, according to the rule of reason, founded in the common rights, and interests, of mankind. On this head it is quite necessary to make some reflections, that will, like angular stones laid on a rock, support the little fabric, the model however of a great building, that I propose to raise.

So plain a matter could never have been rendered intricate and voluminous, had it not been for lawless ambition, extravagant vanity, and the detestable spirit of tyranny, abetted by the private interests of artful men, by adulation

and superstition, two vices to which that staring timid creature man is excessively prone; if authority had not imposed on such as did not pretend to reason; and if such as did attempt to reason had not been caught in the common snares of sophism, and bewildered in the labyrinths of disputation. In this case, therefore, as in all those of great concernment, the shortest and the surest method of arriving at real knowledge is to unlearn the lessons we have been taught, to remount to first principles, and take no-body's word about them; for it is about them that almost all the juggling and legerdemain, employed by men whose trade it is to deceive, are set to work.

Now he, who does so in this case, will discover soon, that the notions concerning the divine institution and right of kings, as well as the absolute power belonging to their office, have no foundation in fact or reason, but have risen from an old alliance between ecclesiastical and civil policy. The characters of king and priest have been sometimes blended together: and when they have been divided, as kings have found the great effects wrought in government by the empire which priests obtain over the consciences of mankind, so priests have been taught by experience, that the best method to preserve their own rank, dignity, wealth, and power, all raised upon a supposed divine right, is to communicate the same pretension to kings, and, by a fallacy common to both, impose their usurpations on a silly world. This they have done: and, in the state, as in the church, these pretensions to a divine right have been generally carried highest by those, who have had the least pretension to the divine favor.

It is worth while to observe, on what principle some men were advanced to a great pre-eminence over others, in the
early

early ages of those nations that are a little known to us : I speak not of such as raised themselves by conquest, but of such as were raised by common consent. Now you will find, in all these proceedings, an entire uniformity of principle. The authors of such inventions, as were of general use to the well-being of mankind, were not only revered and obeyed during their lives, but worshipped after their deaths : they became principal Gods, " *Dii majorum gentium*." The founders of commonwealths, the law-givers, and the heroes of particular states, became Gods of a second class, " *Dii minorum gentium*." All pre-eminence was given in heaven, as well as in earth, in proportion to the benefits that men received. Majesty was the first, and divinity the second, reward. Both were earned by services done to mankind, whom it was easy to lead, in those days of simplicity and superstition, from admiration and gratitude, to adoration and expectation.

WHEN advantage had been taken, by some particular men, of these dispositions in the generality, and religion and government were become two trades or mysteries, new means of attaining to this pre-eminence were soon devised, and new and even contrary motives worked the same effect. Merit had given rank ; but rank was soon kept, and, which is more preposterous, obtained too, without merit. Men were then made kings for reasons as little relative to good government, as the neighing of the horse of the son of HYSTASPES.

BUT the most prevalent, and the general motive was proximity of blood to the last, not to the best, king. Nobility in China mounts upwards : and he, who has it conferred upon him, ennobles his ancestors, not his posterity. A wise institution ! and especially among a people in whose minds a great
veneration

veneration for their forefathers has been always carefully maintained. But in China, as well as in most other countries, royalty has descended, and kingdoms have been reckoned the patrimonies of particular families.

I HAVE read in one of the historians of the latter Roman empire, historians, by the way, whom I will not advise others to mispend their time in reading, that SAPORES, the famous king of Persia against whom JULIAN made the expedition wherein he lost his life, was crowned in his mother's womb. His father left her with child: the magi declared that the child would be a male: whereupon the royal ensigns were brought forth, they were placed on her majesty's belly, and the princes and the satrapes prostrate recognised the embryo-monarch. But to take a more known example, out of multitudes that present themselves; DOMITIAN, the worst, and TRAJAN, the best of princes, were promoted to the empire by the same title. DOMITIAN was the son of FLAVIUS, and the brother, tho' possibly the poisoner too, of TITUS VESPASIAN: TRAJAN was the adopted son of NERVA. Hereditary right served the purpose of one, as well as of the other: and if TRAJAN was translated to a place among the gods, this was no greater a distinction than some of the worst of his predecessors obtained, for reasons generally as good as that which SENECA puts into the mouth of DIESPITER in the Apokolokyntosis of CLAUDIUS; "*cum sit e republica esse aliquem, qui cum Romulo possit ferventia rapa vorare.*" To say the truth, it would have been a wiser measure to have made these royal persons gods at once: as gods they would have done neither good nor hurt; but as emperors, in their way to divinity, they acted like devils.

IF my readers are ready by this time to think me antimonarchial, and in particular an enemy to the succession of kings by hereditary right, I hope to be soon restored to their good opinion. I esteem monarchy above any other form of government, and hereditary monarchy above elective. I reverence kings, their office, their rights, their persons: and it will never be owing to the principles I am going to establish, because the character and government of a PATRIOT KING can be established on no other, if their office and their right are not always held divine, and their persons always sacred.

NOW, we are subject, by the constitution of human nature, and therefore by the will of the Author of this and every other nature, to two laws. One given immediately to all men by God, the same to all, and obligatory alike on all. The other given to man by man; and therefore not the same to all, nor obligatory alike on all: founded indeed on the same principles, but varied by different applications of them to times, to characters, and to a number, which may be reckoned infinite, of other circumstances. By the first, I mean the universal law of reason; and by the second, the particular law, or constitution of laws, by which every distinct community has chosen to be governed.

THE obligation, of submission to both, is discoverable by so clear and so simple an use of our intellectual faculties, that it may be said properly enough to be revealed to us by God: and tho' both these laws cannot be said properly to be given by him, yet our obligation to submit to the civil law is a principal paragraph in the natural law, which he has most manifestly given us. In truth we can no more doubt of the obligations of both these laws, than of the existence of the lawgiver. As supreme

preme Lord over all his works, his general providence regards immediately the great commonwealth of mankind; but then, as supreme Lord likewise, his authority gives a sanction to the particular bodies of law which are made under it. The law of nature is the law of all his subjects: the constitutions of particular governments are like the by-laws of cities, or the appropriated customs of provinces. It follows, therefore, that he who breaks the laws of his country resists the ordinance of God, that is, the law of his nature. God has instituted neither monarchy, nor aristocracy, nor democracy, nor mixed government: but tho' God has instituted no particular form of government among men, yet by the general laws of his kingdom he exacts our obedience to the laws of those communities, to which each of us is attached by birth, or to which we may be attached by a subsequent and lawful engagement.

FROM such plain, unrefined, and therefore, I suppose, true reasoning, the just authority of kings, and the due obedience of subjects, may be deduced with the utmost certainty. And surely it is far better for kings themselves to have their authority thus founded on principles incontestable, and on fair deductions from them, than on the chimeras of madmen, or, what has been more common, the sophisms of knaves. A human right, that cannot be controverted, is preferable, surely, to a pretended divine right, which every man must believe implicitly, as few will do, or not believe at all.

BUT the principles we have laid down do not stop here. A divine right in kings is to be deduced evidently from them: a divine right to govern well, and conformably to the constitution at the head of which they are placed. A divine right to govern ill, is an absurdity: to assert it, is blasphemy. A people may choose, or hereditary succession may raise, a bad prince

prince to the throne ; but a good king alone can derive his right to govern from God. The reason is plain : good government alone can be in the divine intention. God has made us to desire happiness ; he has made our happiness dependent on society ; and the happiness of society dependent on good or bad government. His intention, therefore, was, that government should be good.

THIS is essential to his wisdom ; for wisdom consists, surely, in proportioning means to ends : therefore it cannot be said without absurd impiety, that he confers a right to oppose his intention.

THE office of kings is, then, of right divine, and their persons are to be reputed sacred. As men, they have no such right, no such sacredness belonging to them : as kings, they have both, unless they forfeit them. Reverence for government obliges to reverence governors, who, for the sake of it, are raised above the level of other men : but reverence for governors, independently of government, any further than reverence would be due to their virtues if they were private men, is preposterous, and repugnant to common sense. The spring from which this legal reverence, for so I may call it, arises, is national, not personal. As well might we say that a ship is built, and loaded, and manned, for the sake of any particular pilot, instead of acknowledging that the pilot is made for the sake of the ship, her lading, and her crew, who are always the owners in the political vessel ; as to say that kingdoms were instituted for kings, not kings for kingdoms. In short, and to carry our allusion higher, majesty is not an inherent, but a reflected light.

ALL this is as true of hereditary, as it is of elective monarchy ; tho' the scribblers for tyranny, under the name of mo-

narchy, would have us believe that there is something more august, and more sacred in one than the other. They are sacred alike, and this attribute is to be ascribed or not ascribed, to them, as they answer, or do not answer, the ends of their institution. But there is another comparison to be made, in which a great and most important dissimilitude will be found between hereditary and elective monarchy. Nothing can be more absurd, in pure speculation, than an hereditary right in any mortal to govern other men : and yet, in practice, nothing can be more absurd than to have a king to chuse at every vacancy of a throne. We draw at a lottery indeed in one case, where there are many chances to lose, and few to gain. But have we much more advantage of this kind in the other ? I think not. Upon these, and upon most occasions, the multitude would do at least as well to trust to chance as choice, and to their fortune as to their judgment. But in another respect, the advantage is entirely on the side of hereditary succession ; for, in elective monarchies, these elections, whether well or ill made, are often attended with such national calamities, that even the best reigns cannot make amends for them : whereas, in hereditary monarchy, whether a good or a bad prince succeeds, these calamities are avoided. There is one source of evil the less open : and one source of evil the less in human affairs, where there are so many, is sufficient to decide. We may lament the imperfections of our human state, which is such, that in cases of the utmost importance to the order and good government of society, and by consequence to the happiness of our kind, we are reduced, by the very constitution of our nature, to have no part to take that our reason can approve absolutely. But tho' we lament it, we must submit to it. We must tell ourselves once for all, that perfect schemes are not adapted to our imperfect state ; that Stoical morals and Platonic politics are nothing better than amusements for those who have had little experience in the affairs

affairs of the world, and who have much leisure, “*verba otio-
“ forum senum ad imperitos juvenes;*” which was the censure,
and a just one too, that DIONYSIUS past on some of the
doctrines of the father of the academy. In truth, all that
human prudence can do, is to furnish expedients, and to
compound, as it were, with general vice and folly; employ-
ing reason to act even against her own principles, and teach-
ing us, if I may say so, “*insanire cum ratione,*” which appears
on many occasions not to be the paradox it has been thought.

To conclude this head therefore: as I think a limited mo-
narchy the best of governments, so I think an hereditary mo-
narchy the best of monarchies. I said a limited monarchy; for
an unlimited monarchy, wherein arbitrary will, which is in truth
no rule, is however the sole rule, or stands instead of all rule
of government, must be allowed so great an absurdity, both in
reason informed and uninformed by experience, that it seems
a government fitter for savages than for civilized people.

BUT I think it proper to explain a little more what I
mean, when I say a limited monarchy, that I may leave no-
thing untouched which ought to be taken into consideration
by us, when we attempt to fix our ideas of a PATRIOT
KING.

AMONG many reasons which determine me to prefer
monarchy to every other form of government, this is a prin-
cipal one. When monarchy is the essential form; it may be
more easily and more usefully tempered with aristocracy or de-
mocracy, or both, than either of them, when they are the essen-
tial forms, can be tempered with monarchy. It seems to me,
that the introduction of a real permanent monarchical power,
or any thing more than the pageantry of it, into either of

these, must destroy them and extinguish them, as a greater light extinguishes a less. Whereas it may easily be shewn, and the true form of our government will demonstrate, without seeking any other example, that very considerable aristocratical and democratical powers may be grafted on a monarchical stock, without diminishing the lustre, or restraining the power and authority of the prince, enough to alter in any degree the essential form.

A GREAT difference is made in nature, and therefore the distinction should be always preserved in our notions, between two things that we are apt to confound in speculation, as they have been confounded in practice, legislative and monarchical power. There must be an absolute, unlimited, and uncontrollable power lodged somewhere in every government; but to constitute monarchy, or the government of a single person, it is not necessary that this power should be lodged in the monarch alone. It is no more necessary that he should exclusively and independently establish the rule of his government, than it is, that he should govern without any rule at all: and this surely will be thought reasonable by no man.

I WOULD not say God governs by a rule that we know, or may know, as well as he, and upon our knowledge of which he appeals to men for the justice of his proceedings towards them; which a famous divine has impiously advanced, in a pretended demonstration of his being and attributes. God forbid! But this I may say, that God does always that which is fittest to be done, and that this fitness, whereof neither that presumptuous dogmatist was, nor any created being is, a competent judge, results from the various natures, and more various relations of things: so that, as creator of all systems by which these natures and relations are constituted, he prescribed

scribed to himself the rule, which he follows as governor of every system of being. In short, with reverence be it spoken, God is a monarch, yet not an arbitrary but a limited monarch, limited by the rule which infinite wisdom prescribes to infinite power. I know well enough the impropriety of these expressions; but, when our ideas are inadequate, our expressions must needs be improper. Such conceptions, however, as we are able to form of these attributes, and of the exercise of them in the government of the universe, may serve to shew what I have produced them to shew. If governing without any rule, and by arbitrary will, be not essential to our idea of the monarchy of the Supreme Being, it is plainly ridiculous to suppose them necessarily included in the idea of a human monarchy: and tho' God, in his eternal ideas, for we are able to conceive no other manner of knowing, has prescribed to himself that rule by which he governs the universe he created, it will be just as ridiculous to affirm, that the idea of human monarchy cannot be preserved, if kings are obliged to govern according to a rule established by the wisdom of a state, that was a state before they were kings, and by the consent of a people that they did not most certainly create; especially when the whole executive power is exclusively in their hands, and the legislative power cannot be exercised without their concurrence.

THERE are limitations indeed that would destroy the essential form of monarchy: or, in other words, a monarchical constitution may be changed, under pretence of limiting the monarch. This happened among us in the last century, when the vilest usurpation, and the most infamous tyranny, were established over our nation, by some of the worst and some of the meanest men in it. I will not say, that the essential form of monarchy should be preserved tho' the

the preservation of it were to cause the loss of liberty. "Salus reipublicæ suprema lex esto," is a fundamental law: and, sure I am, the safety of a commonwealth is ill provided for, if the liberty be given up. But this I presume to say, and can demonstrate, that all the limitations necessary to preserve liberty, as long as the spirit of it subsists, and longer than that no limitations of monarchy, nor any other form of government, can preserve it, are compatible with monarchy. I think on these subjects, neither as the Tories, nor as the Whigs have thought: at least I endeavor to avoid the excesses of both. I neither dress up kings like so many burlesque Jupiters, weighing the fortunes of mankind in the scales of fate, and darting thunderbolts at the heads of rebellious giants: nor do I strip them naked, as it were, and leave them at most a few tattered rags to clothe their majesty, but such as can serve really as little for use as for ornament. My aim is to fix this principle; that limitations on a crown ought to be carried as far as it is necessary to secure the liberties of a people; and that all such limitations may subsist, without weakening or endangering monarchy.

I SHALL be told perhaps, for I have heard it said by many, that this point is imaginary; and that limitations, sufficient to procure good government and to secure liberty under a bad prince, cannot be made, unless they are such as will deprive the subjects of many benefits in the reign of a good prince, clog his administration, maintain an unjust jealousy between him and his people, and occasion a defect of power, necessary to preserve the public tranquillity, and to promote the national prosperity. If this was true, here would be a much more melancholy instance of the imperfection of our nature, and of the inefficacy of our reason to supply this imperfection, than the former. In the former, reason prompted
by

by experience avoids a certain evil effectually, and is able to provide, in some measure, against the contingent evils that may arise from the expedient itself. But in the latter, if what is there advanced was true, these provisions against contingent evils would, in some cases, be the occasions of much certain evil, and of positive good in none: under a good prince they would render the administration defective, and under a bad one there would be no government at all. But the truth is widely different from this representation. The limitations necessary to preserve liberty under monarchy will restrain effectually a bad prince, without being ever felt as shackles by a good one. Our constitution is brought, or almost brought, to such a point, a point of perfection I think it, that no king, who is not, in the true meaning of the word, a patriot, can govern Britain with ease, security, honor, dignity, or indeed with sufficient power and strength. But yet a king, who is a patriot, may govern with all the former; and, besides them, with power as extended as the most absolute monarch can boast, and a power, too, far more agreeable in the enjoyment as well as more effectual in the operation.

To attain these great and noble ends, the patriotism must be real, and not in shew alone. It is something to desire to appear a patriot: and the desire of having fame is a step towards deserving it, because it is a motive the more to deserve it. If it be true, as TACITUS says, "*contemptu famæ contemni virtutem,*" that a contempt of a good name, or an indifference about it, begets or accompanies always a contempt of virtue; the contrary will be true: and they are certainly both true. But this motive alone is not sufficient. To constitute a patriot, whether king or subject, there must be something more substantial than a desire of fame, in the composition; and if there be not, this desire of fame will never rise above that

fentiment which may be compared to the coquetry of women ; a fondness of transient applause, which is courted by vanity, given by flattery, and spends itself in shew, like the qualities which acquire it. Patriotism must be founded in great principles, and supported by great virtues. The chief of these principles I have endeavored to trace ; and I will not scruple to assert, that a man can be a good king upon no other. He may, without them and by complection, be unambitious, generous, good-natured ; but, without them, the exercise even of these virtues will be often ill directed : and, with principles of another sort, he will be drawn easily, notwithstanding these virtues, from all the purposes of his institution.

I MENTION these opposite principles the rather, because, instead of wondering that so many kings, unfit and unworthy to be trusted with the government of mankind, appear in the world, I have been tempted to wonder that there are any tolerable ; when I have considered the flattery that environs them most commonly from the cradle, and the tendency of all those false notions that are instilled into them by precept, and by example, by the habits of courts, and by the interested selfish views of courtiers. They are bred to esteem themselves of a distinct and superior species among men, as men are among animals.

LEWIS the fourteenth was a strong instance of the effect of this education, which trains up kings to be tyrants, without knowing that they are so. That oppression under which he kept his people, during the whole course of a long reign, might proceed, in some degree, from the natural haughtiness of his temper ; but it proceeded, in a greater degree, from the principles and habits of his education. By this he
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had been brought to look on his kingdom as a patrimony that descended to him from his ancestors, and that was to be considered in no other light: so that when a very considerable man had discoursed to him at large of the miserable condition, to which his people was reduced, and had frequently used this word, "l'état;" tho' the king approved the substance of all he had said, yet he was shocked at the frequent repetition of this word, and complained of it as of a kind of indecency to himself. This will not appear so strange to our second, as it may very justly to our first reflections; for what wonder is it, that princes are easily betrayed into an error that takes its rise in the general imperfection of our nature, in our pride, our vanity, and our presumption? the bastard children, but the children still, of self-love; a spurious brood, but often a favorite brood, that governs the whole family. As men are apt to make themselves the measure of all being, so they make themselves the final cause of all creation. Thus the reputed orthodox philosophers in all ages have taught, that the world was made for man, the earth for him to inhabit, and all the luminous bodies, in the immense expanse around us, for him to gaze at. Kings do no more, no not so much, when they imagine themselves the final cause for which societies were formed, and governments instituted.

THIS capital error, in which almost every prince is confirmed by his education, has so great extent and so general influence, that a right to do every iniquitous thing in government may be derived from it. But, as if this was not enough, the characters of princes are spoiled many more ways by their education. I shall not descend into a detail of such particulars, nor presume so much as to hint what regulations might be made about the education of princes, nor what part our parliaments might take occasionally in this momentous

affair, lest I should appear too refining, or too presumptuous, in my speculations. But I may assert in general, that the indifference of mankind upon this head, especially in a government constituted like ours, is monstrous.

I MAY also take notice of another cause of the mistakes of princes, I mean the general conduct of those who are brought near to their persons. Such men, let me say, have a particular duty arising from this very situation; a duty common to them all, because it arises not from their stations, which are different, but from their situation, which is the same. To enumerate the various applications of this duty would be too minute and tedious; but this may suffice, that all such men should bear constantly in mind, that the master they serve is, or is to be the king of their country: that their attachment to him, therefore, is not to be like that of other servants to other masters, for his sake alone, or for his sake and their own, but for the sake of their country likewise.

CRATERUS loves the king, but HEPHESTION loves ALEXANDER, was a saying of the last that has been often quoted, but not censured as it ought to be. ALEXANDER gave the preference to the attachment of HEPHESTION; but this preference was due undoubtedly to that of CRATERUS. Attachment to a private person must comprehend a great concern for his character and his interests: but attachment to one who is, or may be a king, much more; because the character of the latter is more important to himself and others; and because his interests are vastly more complicated with those of his country, and in some sort with those of mankind. ALEXANDER himself seemed, upon one occasion, to make the distinction that should be always made between our attachments to a prince, and to any private person. It was when

PARMENIO

PARMENIO advised him to accept the terms of peace which DARIUS offered: they were great, he thought them so; but he thought, no matter for my purpose whether justly or not, that it would be unbecoming him to accept them; therefore he rejected them, but acknowledged, that "he would have done as he was advised to do, if he had been PARMENIO."

As to persons who are not about a prince in the situation here spoken of, they can do little more than proportion their applause, and the demonstrations of their confidence and affection, to the benefits they actually receive from the prince on the throne, or to the just expectations that a successor gives them. It is of the latter I propose to speak here particularly. If he gives them those of a good reign, we may assure ourselves that they will carry, and in this case they ought to carry that applause, and those demonstrations of their confidence and affection, as high as such a prince himself can desire. Thus the prince and the people take, in effect, a sort of engagement with one another; the prince to govern well, and the people to honor and obey him. If he gives them expectations of a bad reign, they have this obligation to him at least, that he puts them early on their guard; and an obligation, and an advantage it will be, if they prepare for his accession as for a great and inevitable evil; and if they guard on every occasion against the ill use, they foresee, that he will make of money and power. Above all, they should not suffer themselves to be caught in the common snare, which is laid under specious pretences of "gaining such a prince, and of keeping him by public compliances out of bad hands." That argument has been pressed more than once, has prevailed, and has been fruitful of most pernicious consequences. None indeed can be more absurd. It is not

unlike the reasoning of those savages who worship the devil, not because they love him or honor him, or expect any good from him, but that he may do them no hurt. Nay, it is more absurd ; for the savages suppose that the devil has, independently of them, the power to hurt them : whereas the others put more power into the hands of a prince, because he has already some power to hurt them ; and trust to the justice and gratitude of one, who wants sense, virtue, or both, rather than increase and fortify the barriers against his folly and his vices.

BUT the truth is, that men, who reason and act in this manner, either mean, or else are led by such as mean, nothing more than to make a private court at the public expence ; who chuse to be the instruments of a bad king rather than to be out of power ; and who are often so wicked, that they would prefer such a service to that of the best of kings. In fine, these reasons, and every other reason for providing against a bad reign in prospect, acquire a new force, when one weak or wicked prince is, in the order of succession, to follow another of the same character. Such provisions indeed are hardest to be obtained when they are the most necessary ; that is, when the spirit of liberty begins to flag in a free people, and when they become disposed, by habits that have grown insensibly upon them, to a base submission. But they are necessary too, even when they are easiest to be obtained ; that is, when the spirit of liberty is in full strength, and a disposition to oppose all instances of mal-administration, and to resist all attempts on liberty, is universal. In both cases, the endeavors of every man who loves his country will be employed with incessant care and constancy to obtain them, that good government and liberty may be the better preserved and secured ; but in the latter case for this
I further

further reason also, that the preservation and security of these may be provided for, not only better, but more consistently with public tranquillity, by constitutional methods, and a legal course of opposition to the excesses of regal or ministerial power. What I touch upon here might be made extremely plain; and I think the observation would appear to be of no small importance: but I should be carried too far from my subject, and my subject will afford me matter of more agreeable speculation.

IT is true that a prince, who gives just reasons to expect that his reign will be that of a PATRIOT KING, may not always meet, and from all persons, such returns as such expectations deserve: but they must not hinder either the prince from continuing to give them, or the people from continuing to acknowledge them. United, none can hurt them: and if no artifice interrupts, no power can defeat, the effects of their perseverance. It will blast many a wicked project, keep virtue in countenance, and vice, to some degree at least, in awe. Nay, if it should fail to have these effects, if we should even suppose a good prince to suffer with the people, and in some measure for them, yet many advantages would accrue to him: for instance, the cause of the people he is to govern, and his own cause would be made the same by their common enemies. He would feel grievances himself as a subject, before he had the power of imposing them as a king. He would be formed in that school out of which the greatest and the best of monarchs have come, the school of affliction: and all the vices, which had prevailed before his reign, would serve as so many foils to the glories of it. But I hasten to speak of the greatest of all these advantages, and of that which a PATRIOT KING will esteem to be such; whose ways of thinking and acting to so glorious a purpose as the

the re-establishment of a free constitution, when it has been shook by the iniquity of former administrations, I shall endeavor to explain.

WHAT I have here said will pass among some for the reveries of a distempered brain, at best for the vain speculations of an idle man who has lost sight of the world, or who had never sagacity enough to discern in government the practicable from the impracticable. Will it not be said, that this is advising a king to rouse a spirit which may turn against himself; to reject the sole expedient of governing a limited monarchy with success; to labor to confine, instead of laboring to extend, his power: to patch up an old constitution, which his people are disposed to lay aside, instead of forming a new one more agreeable to them, and more advantageous to him; to refuse, in short, to be an absolute monarch, when every circumstance invites him to it? All these particulars, in every one of which the question is begged, will be thus represented, and will be then ridiculed as paradoxes fit to be ranked among the "*mirabilia et inopinata*" of the Stoics, and such as no man in his senses can maintain in earnest. These judgments and these reasonings may be expected in an age as futile and as corrupt as ours: in an age wherein so many betray the cause of liberty, and act not only without regard, but in direct opposition, to the most important interests of their country; not only occasionally, by surprise, by weakness, by strong temptation, or sly seduction, but constantly, steadily, by deliberate choice, and in pursuance of principles they avow and propagate: in an age when so many others shrink from the service of their country, or promote it coolly and uncertainly, in subordination to their own interest and humor, or to those of a party: in an age, when to assert the truth is called spreading of delusion,

lusion, and to assert the cause of liberty and good government, is termed sowing of sedition. But I have declared already my unconcernedness at the censure or ridicule of such men as these; for whose supposed abilities I have much well-grounded contempt, and against whose real immorality I have as just indignation.

LET us come, therefore, to the bar of reason and experience, where we shall find these paradoxes admitted as plain and almost self-evident propositions, and these reveries and vain speculations as important truths, confirmed by experience in all ages and all countries.

MACHIAVEL is an author who should have great authority with the persons likely to oppose me. He proposes to princes the amplification of their power, the extent of their dominion, and the subjection of their people, as the sole objects of their policy. He devises and recommends all means that tend to these purposes, without the consideration of any duty owing to God or man, or any regard to the morality or immorality of actions. Yet even he declares the affectation of virtue to be useful to princes: he is so far on my side in the present question. The only difference between us is, I would have the virtue real: he requires no more than the appearance of it.

IN the tenth chapter of the first book of Discourses, he appears convinced, such is the force of truth, but how consistently with himself let others determine, that the supreme glory of a prince accrues to him who establishes good government and a free constitution; and that a prince, ambitious of fame, must wish to come into possession of a disordered and corrupted state, not to finish the wicked work that others have begun, and to complete the ruin, but to stop
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the progress of the first, and to prevent the last. He thinks this not only the true way to fame, but to security and quiet; as the contrary leads, for here is no third way, and a prince must make his option between these two, not only to infamy, but to danger and to perpetual disquietude. He represents those who might establish a commonwealth or a legal monarchy, and who chuse to improve the opportunity of establishing tyranny, that is, monarchy without any rule of law, as men who are deceived by false notions of good, and false appearances of glory, and who are in effect blind to their true interest in every respect: "*ne si auvegono per questo partito quanta fama, quanta gloria, quanto honore, sicurta, quiete, con satisfatione d'animo é fuggono, et in quanta infamia, vituperio, biasimo, pericolo & inquietudine incorrono.*" He touches another advantage which patriot princes reap: and in that he contradicts flatly the main point on which his half-taught scholars insist. He denies that such princes diminish their power by circumscribing it: and affirms, with truth on his side, that TIMOLEON, and others of the same character whom he had cited, possessed as great authority in their country, with every other advantage besides, as DIONYSIUS or PHALARIS had acquired, with the loss of all those advantages. Thus far MACHIAVEL reasons justly; but he takes in only a part of his subject, and confines himself to those motives that should determine a wise prince to maintain liberty, because it is his interest to do so. He rises no higher than the consideration of mere interest, of fame, of security, of quiet, and of power, all personal to the prince: and by such motives alone even his favorite BORGIA might have been determined to affect the virtues of a patriot prince; more than which this great doctor in political knowledge would not have required of him. But he is far from going up to that motive which should above all determine a good prince

prince to hold this conduct, because it is his duty to do so; a duty that he owes to God by one law, and to his people by another. Now it is with this that I shall begin what I intend to offer concerning the system of principles and conduct by which a PATRIOT KING will govern himself and his people. I shall not only begin higher, but descend into more detail, and keep still in my eye the application of the whole to the constitution of Great-Britain, even to the present state of our nation, and temper of our people.

I THINK enough has been already said, to establish the first and true principles of monarchical and indeed of every other kind of government: and I will say with confidence, that no principles but these, and such as these, can be advanced, which deserve to be treated seriously; tho' Mr. LOCKE condescended to examine those of FILMER, more out of regard to the prejudices of the time, than to the importance of the work. Upon such foundations we must conclude, that since men were directed by nature to form societies, because they cannot by their nature subsist without them, nor in a state of individuality; and since they were directed in like manner to establish governments, because societies cannot be maintained without them, nor subsist in a state of anarchy; the ultimate end of all governments is the good of the people, for whose sake they were made, and without whose consent they could not have been made. In forming societies, and submitting to government, men gave up part of that liberty to which they are all born, and all alike. But why? Is government incompatible with a full enjoyment of liberty? By no means. But because popular liberty without government will degenerate into licence, as government without sufficient liberty will degenerate into tyranny, they are mutually necessary to each other, good government to support

legal liberty, and legal liberty to preserve good government.

I SPEAK not here of people, if any such there are, who have been savage or stupid enough to submit to tyranny by original contract; nor of those nations on whom tyranny has stolen as it were imperceptibly, or been imposed by violence, and settled by prescription. I shall exercise no political casuistry about the rights of such kings, and the obligations of such people. Men are to take their lots, perhaps, in governments as in climates, to fence against the inconveniencies of both, and to bear what they cannot alter. But I speak of people who have been wise and happy enough to establish, and to preserve, free constitutions of government, as the people of this island have done. To these, therefore, I say, that their kings are under the most sacred obligations that human law can create, and divine law authorize, to defend and maintain, in the first place, and preferably to every other consideration, the freedom of such constitutions.

THE good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government. Governors are, therefore, appointed for this end, and the civil constitution which appoints them, and invests them with their power, is determined to do so by that law of nature and reason, which has determined the end of government, and which admits this form of government as the proper mean of arriving at it. Now, the greatest good of a people is their liberty: and, in the case here referred to, the people has judged it so, and provided for it accordingly. Liberty is to the collective body, what health is to every individual body. Without health no pleasure can be tasted by man: without liberty no happiness can be enjoyed by society. The obligation, therefore, to defend and maintain the
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freedom of such constitutions will appear most sacred to a PATRIOT KING.

KINGS who have weak understandings, bad hearts, and strong prejudices, and all these, as it often happens, inflamed by their passions, and rendered incurable by their self-conceit and presumption; such kings are apt to imagine, and they conduct themselves so as to make many of their subjects imagine, that the king and the people in free governments are rival powers, who stand in competition with one another, who have different interests, and must of course have different views: that the rights and privileges of the people are so many spoils taken from the right and prerogative of the crown; and that the rules and laws, made for the exercise and security of the former, are so many diminutions of their dignity, and restraints on their power.

A PATRIOT KING will see all this in a far different and much truer light. The constitution will be considered by him as one law, consisting of two tables, containing the rule of his government, and the measure of his subjects obedience; or as one system, composed of different parts and powers, but all duly proportioned to one another, and conspiring by their harmony to the perfection of the whole. He will make one, and but one, distinction between his rights, and those of his people: he will look on his to be a trust, and theirs a property. He will discern, that he can have a right to no more than is trusted to him by the constitution: and that his people, who had an original right to the whole by the law of nature, can have the sole indefeasible right to any part; and really have such a right to that part which they have reserved to themselves. In fine, the constitution will be revered by him as the law of God and of man; the force

of which binds the king as much as the meanest subject, and the reason of which binds him much more.

THUS he will think, and on these principles he will act, whether he come to the throne by immediate or remote election. I say remote; for in hereditary monarchies, where men are not elected, families are: and, therefore, some authors would have it believed, that when a family has been once admitted, and an hereditary right to the crown recognized in it, that right cannot be forfeited, nor that throne become vacant, as long as any heir of the family remains. How much more agreeable to truth and to common sense would these authors have written, if they had maintained, that every prince who comes to a crown in the course of succession, were he the last of five hundred, comes to it under the same conditions under which the first took it, whether expressed or implied; as well as under those, if any such there be, which have been since made by legal authority: and that royal blood can give no right, nor length of succession any prescription, against the constitution of a government? The first and the last hold by the same tenure.

I MENTION this the rather, because I have an imperfect remembrance, that some scribbler was employed, or employed himself, to assert the hereditary right of the present family. A task so unnecessary to any good purpose, that, I believe, a suspicion arose of its having been designed for a bad one. A PATRIOT KING will never countenance such impertinent fallacies, nor deign to lean on broken reeds. He knows that his right is founded on the laws of God and man, that none can shake it but himself, and that his own virtue is sufficient to maintain it against all opposition.

I HAVE dwelt the longer on the first and general principles of monarchical government, and have recurred the oftener to them, because it seems to me that they are the seeds of patriotism, which must be sown as soon as possible in the mind of a prince, lest their growth should be checked by luxuriant weeds, which are apt to abound in such soils, and under which no crop of kingly virtues can ever flourish. A prince, who does not know the true principles, cannot propose to himself the true ends, of government: and he, who does not propose them, will never direct his conduct steadily to them. There is not a deeper, nor a finer observation in all my Lord BACON's works, than one which I shall apply and paraphrase on this occasion. The most compendious, the most noble, and the most effectual remedy, which can be opposed to the uncertain and irregular motions of the human mind, agitated by various passions, allured by various temptations, inclining sometimes towards a state of moral perfection, and oftener, even in the best, towards a state of moral depravation, is this. We must chuse betimes such virtuous objects as are proportioned to the means we have of pursuing them, and as belong particularly to the stations we are in, and to the duties of those stations. We must determine and fix our minds in such manner upon them, that the pursuit of them may become the business, and the attainment of them the end, of our whole lives. Thus we shall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, slow, and imperfect operations of art. We must not proceed, in forming the moral character, as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on one part, and sometimes on another: but we must proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as nature does in forming a flower, an animal, or any other of her pro-

productions; “rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit.” “She throws out altogether, and at once, the whole system of every being, and the rudiments of all the parts.” The vegetable or the animal grows in bulk and increases in strength; but is the same from the first. Just so our PATRIOT KING must be a patriot from the first. He must be such in resolution, before he grows such in practice. He must fix at once the general principles and ends of all his actions, and determine that his whole conduct shall be regulated by them, and directed to them. When he has done this, he will have turned, by one great effort, the bent of his mind so strongly towards the perfection of a kingly character, that he will exercise with ease, and as it were by a natural determination, all the virtues of it; which will be suggested to him on every occasion by the principles wherewith his mind is imbued, and by those ends that are the constant objects of his attention.

LET us then see in what manner, and with what effect he will do this, upon the greatest occasion he can have of exercising these virtues, the maintenance of liberty, and the re-establishment of a free constitution.

THE freedom of a constitution rests on two points. The orders of it are one: so MACHIAVEL calls them, and I know not how to call them more significantly. He means not only the forms and customs, but the different classes and assemblies of men, with different powers and privileges attributed to them, which are established in the state. The spirit and character of the people are the other. On the mutual conformity and harmony of these the preservation of liberty depends. To take away, or essentially to alter the former, cannot be brought to pass, whilst the latter remains

mains in original purity and vigor: nor can liberty be destroyed by this method, unless the attempt be made with a military force sufficient to conquer the nation, which would not submit in this case till it was conquered, nor with much security to the conqueror even then. But these orders of the state may be essentially altered, and serve more effectually to the destruction of liberty, than the taking of them away would serve, if the spirit and character of the people are lost.

Now this method of destroying liberty is the most dangerous on many accounts, particularly on this; that even the reign of the weakest prince, and the policy of the weakest ministry, may effect the destruction, when circumstances are favorable to this method. If a people is growing corrupt, there is no need of capacity to contrive, nor of insinuation to gain, nor of plausibility to seduce, nor of eloquence to persuade, nor of authority to impose, nor of courage to attempt. The most incapable, awkward, ungracious, shocking, profligate, and timorous wretches, invested with power, and masters of the purse, will be sufficient for the work, when the people are complices in it. Luxury is rapacious; let them feed it: the more it is fed, the more profuse it will grow. Want is the consequence of profusion, venality of want, and dependance of venality. By this progression, the first men of a nation will become the pensioners of the last; and he who has talents, the most implicit tool to him who has none. The distemper will soon descend, not indeed to make a deposit below, and to remain there, but to pervade the whole body.

It may seem a singular, but it is perhaps a true proposition, that such a king and such a ministry are more likely to begin, and to pursue with success, this method of destroying

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ing a free constitution of government, than a king and a ministry that were held in great esteem would be. This very esteem might put many on their guard against the latter ; but the former may draw from contempt the advantage of not being feared : and an advantage this is in the beginning of corruption. Men are willing to excuse, not only to others but to themselves, the first steps they take in vice, and especially in vice that affects the public, and whereof the public has a right to complain. Those, therefore, who might withstand corruption in one case, from a persuasion that the consequence was too certain to leave them any excuse, may yield to it when they can flatter themselves, and endeavor to flatter others, that liberty cannot be destroyed, nor the constitution be demolished, by such hands as hold the sceptre, and guide the reins of the administration. But alas ! the flattery is gross, and the excuse without color. These men may ruin their country, but they cannot impose on any, unless it be on themselves. Nor will even this imposition on themselves be long necessary. Their consciences will be soon scared, by habit and by example : and they, who wanted an excuse to begin, will want none to continue and to complete, the tragedy of their country. Old men will outlive the shame of losing liberty, and young men will arise who know not that it ever existed. A spirit of slavery will oppose and oppress the spirit of liberty, and seem at least to be the genius of the nation. Such too it will become in time, when corruption has once grown to this height, unless the progress of it can be interrupted.

How inestimable a blessing therefore must the succession of a PATRIOT KING be esteemed in such circumstances as these, which would be a blessing, and a great one too, in any other ? He, and he alone, can save a country whose ruin
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is so far advanced. The utmost that private men can do, who remain untainted by the general contagion, is to keep the spirit of liberty alive in a few breasts; to protest against what they cannot hinder, and to claim on every occasion what they cannot by their own strength recover.

MACHIAVEL has treated, in the discourses before cited, this question, "whether, when the people are grown corrupt, a free government can be maintained, if they enjoy it; or established, if they enjoy it not?" And upon the whole matter he concludes for the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of succeeding in either case. It will be worth while to observe his way of reasoning. He asserts very truly, and proves by the example of the Roman commonwealth; that those orders which are proper to maintain liberty, whilst a people remain uncorrupt, become improper and hurtful to liberty, when a people is grown corrupt. To remedy this abuse, new laws alone will not be sufficient. These orders, therefore, must be changed, according to him, and the constitution must be adapted to the depraved manners of the people. He shews, that such a change in the orders, and constituent parts of the government, is impracticable, whether the attempt be made by gentle and slow, or by violent and precipitate measures: and from thence he concludes, that a free commonwealth can neither be maintained by a corrupt people, nor be established among them. But he adds, that "if this can possibly be done, it must be done by drawing the constitution to the monarchical form of government," "*acciochè quelli huomini i quali dalle leggi non possono essere corretti, fussero da una podestà, in qualche modo, frenati.*" "That a corrupt people, whom law cannot correct, may be restrained and corrected by a kingly power." Here is the hinge on which the whole turns.

ANOTHER advantage that a free monarchy has over all other forms of free government, besides the advantage of being more easily and more usefully tempered with aristocratical and democratical powers, which is mentioned above, is this. Those governments are made up of different parts, and are apt to be disjointed by the shocks to which they are exposed : but a free monarchical government is more compact, because there is a part the more that keeps, like the key-stone of a vault, the whole building together. They cannot be mended in a state of corruption, they must be in effect constituted anew, and in that attempt they may be dissolved for ever : but this is not the case of a free monarchy. To preserve liberty by new laws and new schemes of government, whilst the corruption of a people continues and grows, is absolutely impossible : but to restore and preserve it under old laws, and an old constitution, by reinfusing into the minds of men the spirit of this constitution, is not only possible, but is, in a particular manner, easy to a king. A corrupt commonwealth remains without remedy, tho' all the orders and forms of it subsist : a free monarchical government cannot remain absolutely so, as long as the orders and forms of the constitution subsist. These, alone, are indeed nothing more than the dead letter of freedom, or masks of liberty. In the first character they serve to no good purpose whatsoever : in the second they serve to a bad one ; because tyranny, or government by will, becomes more severe, and more secure, under their disguise, than it would if it was barefaced and avowed. But a king can, easily to himself and without violence to his people, renew the spirit of liberty in their minds, quicken this dead letter, and pull off this mask.

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As soon as corruption ceases to be an expedient of government, and it will cease to be such as soon as a PATRIOT KING is raised to the throne, the panacea is applied; the spirit of the constitution revives of course: and, as fast as it revives, the orders and forms of the constitution are restored to their primitive integrity, and become what they were intended to be, real barriers against arbitrary power, not blinds nor masks under which tyranny may lie concealed. Depravation of manners exposed the constitution to ruin; reformation will secure it. Men decline easily from virtue; for there is a devil too in the political system, a constant tempter at hand: a PATRIOT KING will want neither power nor inclination to cast out this devil, to make the temptation cease, and to deliver his subjects, if not from the guilt, yet from the consequence, of their fall. Under him, they will not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; for, by rendering public virtue and real capacity the sole means of acquiring any degree of power or profit in the state, he will set the passions of their hearts on the side of liberty and good government. A PATRIOT KING is the most powerful of all reformers; for he is himself a sort of standing miracle, so rarely seen and so little understood, that the sure effects of his appearance will be admiration and love in every honest breast, confusion and terror to every guilty conscience, but submission and resignation in all. A new people will seem to arise with a new king. Innumerable metamorphoses, like those which poets feign, will happen in very deed: and, while men are conscious that they are the same individuals, the difference of their sentiments will almost persuade them that they are changed into different beings.

BUT, that we may not expect more from such a king than even he can perform, it is necessary to premise another general observation, after which I shall descend into some that will be more particular.

ABSOLUTE stability is not to be expected in any thing human; for that which exists immutably exists alone necessarily, and this attribute of the Supreme Being, can neither belong to man, nor to the works of man. The best instituted governments, like the best constituted animal bodies, carry in them the seeds of their destruction: and, tho' they grow and improve for a time, they will soon tend visibly to their dissolution. Every hour they live is an hour the less that they have to live. All that can be done, therefore, to prolong the duration of a good government, is to draw it back, on every favorable occasion, to the first good principles on which it was founded. When these occasions happen often, and are well improved, such governments are prosperous and durable. When they happen seldom, or are ill improved, these political bodies live in pain, or in languor, and die soon.

A PATRIOT KING affords one of the occasions I mention in a free monarchical state, and the very best that can happen. It should be improved, like snatches of fair weather at sea, to repair the damages sustained in the last storm, and to prepare to resist the next. For such a king cannot secure to his people a succession of princes like himself. He will do all he can towards it, by his example and by his instruction. But after all, the royal mantle will not convey the spirit of patriotism into another king, as the mantle of ELIJAH did the gift of prophecy into another prophet.

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The utmost he can do, and that which deserves the utmost gratitude from his subjects, is to restore good government, to revive the spirit of it, and to maintain and confirm both, during the whole course of his reign. The rest his people must do for themselves. If they do not, they will have none but themselves to blame: if they do, they will have the principal obligation to him. In all events, they will have been free men one reign the longer by his means, and perhaps more; since he will leave them much better prepared and disposed to defend their liberties, than he found them.

THIS general observation being made, let us now descend, in some detail, to the particular steps and measures that such a king must pursue, to merit a much nobler title than all those which many princes of the west, as well as the east, are so proud to accumulate.

FIRST then, he must begin to govern as soon as he begins to reign. For the very first steps he makes in government will give the first impression, and as it were the presage of his reign; and may be of great importance in many other respects besides that of opinion and reputation. His first care will be, no doubt, to purge his court, and to call into the administration such men as he can assure himself will serve on the same principles on which he intends to govern.

As to the first point; if the precedent reign has been bad, we know how he will find the court composed. The men in power will be some of those adventurers, busy and bold, who thrust and crowd themselves early into the intrigue of party and the management of affairs of state, often without true ability, always without true ambition, or even the appearances of virtue: who mean nothing more than
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what is called making a fortune, the acquisition of wealth to satisfy avarice, and of titles and ribbands to satisfy vanity. Such as these are sure to be employed by a weak, or a wicked king: they impose on the first, and are chosen by the last. Nor is it marvellous that they are so, since every other want is supplied in them by the want of good principles and a good conscience; and since these defects become ministerial perfections, in a reign when measures are pursued and designs carried on that every honest man will disapprove. All the prostitutes who set themselves to sale, all the locusts who devour the land, with crowds of spies, parasites, and sycophants, will surround the throne under the patronage of such ministers; and whole swarms of little, noisome, nameless insects will hum and buzz in every corner of the court. Such ministers will be cast off, and such abettors of a ministry will be chased away together, and at once, by a PATRIOT KING.

SOME of them perhaps will be abandoned by him; not to party-fury, but to national justice; not to sate private resentments, and to serve particular interests, but to make satisfaction for wrongs done to their country, and to stand as examples of terror to future administrations. Clemency makes, no doubt, an amiable part of the character I attempt to draw; but clemency, to be a virtue, must have its bounds, like other virtues: and surely these bounds are extended enough by a maxim I have read somewhere, that frailties and even vices may be passed over, but not enormous crimes; "*multa donanda ingeniis puto, sed donanda vitia, non portenta.*"

AMONG the bad company, with which such a court will abound, may be reckoned a sort of men too low to be much regarded, and too high to be quite neglected; the lumber of
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every administration, the furniture of every court. These gilt carved things are seldom answerable for more than the men on a chess-board, who are moved about at will, and on whom the conduct of the game is not to be charged. Some of these every prince must have about him. The pageantry of a court requires that he should: and this pageantry, like many other despicable things, ought not to be laid aside. But as much sameness as there may appear in the characters of this sort of men, there is one distinction that will be made, whenever a good prince succeeds to the throne after an iniquitous administration: the distinction I mean is, between those who have affected to dip themselves deeply in precedent iniquities, and those who have had the virtue to keep aloof from them, or the good luck not to be called to any share in them. And thus much for the first point, that of purging his court.

As to the second, that of calling to his administration such men as he can assure himself will serve on the same principles on which he intends to govern, there is no need to enlarge much upon it. A good prince will no more chuse ill men, than a wise prince will chuse fools. Deception in one case is indeed more easy than in the other; because a knave may be an artful hypocrite, whereas a silly fellow can never impose himself for a man of sense. And least of all, in a country like ours, can either of these deceptions happen, if any degree of the discernment of spirits be employed to chuse. The reason is, because every man here, who stands forward enough in rank and reputation to be called to the councils of his king, must have given proofs before-hand of his patriotism, as well as of his capacity, if he has either, sufficient to determine his general character.

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THERE is, however, one distinction to be made as to the capacity of ministers, on which I will insist a little: because I think it very important at all times, particularly so at this time; and because it escapes observation most commonly. The distinction I mean is that between a cunning man and a wise man: and this distinction is built on a manifest difference in nature, how imperceptible soever it may become to weak eyes, or to eyes that look at their object through the false medium of custom and habit. My lord BACON says, that cunning is left-handed or crooked wisdom. I would rather say, that it is a part, but the lowest part, of wisdom; employed alone by some, because they have not the other parts to employ; and by some, because it is as much as they want, within those bounds of action which they prescribe to themselves, and sufficient to the ends that they propose. The difference seems to consist in degree, and application, rather than in kind. Wisdom is neither left-handed, nor crooked: but the heads of some men contain little, and the hearts of others employ it wrong. To use my lord BACON's own comparison, the cunning man knows how to pack the cards, the wise man how to play the game better: but it would be of no use to the first to pack the cards, if his knowledge stopped here, and he had no skill in the game; nor to the second to play the game better, if he did not know how to pack the cards, that he might unpack them by new shuffling. Inferior wisdom or cunning may get the better of folly: but superior wisdom will get the better of cunning. Wisdom and cunning have often the same objects; but a wise man will have more and greater in his view. The least will not fill his soul, nor ever become the principal there; but will be pursued in subserviency, in subordination at least, to the other. Wisdom and cunning may employ
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sometimes the same means too: but the wise man stoops to these means, and the other cannot rise above them. Simulation and dissimulation, for instance, are the chief arts of cunning: the first will be esteemed always by a wise man unworthy of him, and will be therefore avoided by him, in every possible case; for, to resume my Lord BACON's comparison, simulation is put on that we may look into the cards of another, whereas dissimulation intends nothing more than to hide our own. Simulation is a stiletto, not only an offensive, but an unlawful weapon: and the use of it may be rarely, very rarely, excused, but never justified. Dissimulation is a shield, as secrecy is armor: and it is no more possible to preserve secrecy in the administration of public affairs without some degree of dissimulation, than it is to succeed in it without secrecy. Those two arts of cunning are like the alloy mingled with pure ore. A little is necessary, and will not debase the coin below its proper standard; but if more than that little be employed, the coin loses its currency, and the coiner his credit.

WE may observe much the same difference between wisdom and cunning, both as to the objects they propose and to the means they employ, as we observe between the visual powers of different men. One sees distinctly the objects that are near to him, their immediate relations, and their direct tendencies: and a sight like this serves well enough the purpose of those who concern themselves no further. The cunning minister is one of those: he neither sees, nor is concerned to see, any further than his personal interests, and the support of his administration, require. If such a man overcomes any actual difficulty, avoids any immediate distress, or, without doing either of these effectually, gains a little time, by all the low artifice which cunning is ready to suggest and baseness

of mind to employ, he triumphs, and is flattered by his mercenary train, on the great event ; which amounts often to no more than this, that he got into distress by one series of faults, and out of it by another. The wise minister sees, and is concerned to see further, because government has a further concern : he sees the objects that are distant as well as those that are near, and all their remote relations, and even their indirect tendencies. He thinks of fame as well as of applause, and prefers that, which to be enjoyed must be given, to that which may be bought. He considers his administration as a single day in the great year of government ; but as a day that is affected by those which went before, and that must affect those which are to follow. He combines, therefore, and compares all these objects, relations, and tendencies ; and the judgment he makes, on an entire not a partial survey of them, is the rule of his conduct. That scheme of the reason of state, which lies open before a wise minister, contains all the great principles of government, and all the great interests of his country : so that, as he prepares some events, he prepares against others, whether they be likely to happen during his administration, or in some future time.

MANY reflections might be added to these, and many examples be brought to illustrate them. Some I could draw from the men I have seen at the head of business, and make very strong contrasts of men of great wisdom with those of mere cunning. But I conclude this head, that I may proceed to another of no less importance.

To espouse no party, but to govern like the common father of his people, is so essential to the character of a PATRIOT KING, that he who does otherwise forfeits the title. It is the peculiar privilege and glory of this character, that
princes

princes who maintain it, and they alone, are so far from the necessity, that they are not exposed to the temptation, of governing by a party; which must always end in the government of a faction: the faction of the prince, if he has ability; the faction of his ministers, if he has not; and, either one way or other, in the oppression of the people. For faction is to party what the superlative is to the positive: party is a political evil, and faction is the worst of all parties. The true image of a free people, governed by a PATRIOT KING, is that of a patriarchal family, where the head and all the members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit: and where, if any are perverse enough to have another, they will be soon borne down by the superiority of those who have the same; and, far from making a division, they will but confirm the union of the little state. That to approach as near as possible to these ideas of perfect government, and social happiness under it, is desirable in every state, no man will be absurd enough to deny. The sole question is, therefore, how near to them it is possible to attain? For, if this attempt be not absolutely impracticable, all the views of a PATRIOT KING will be directed to make it succeed. Instead of abetting the divisions of his people, he will endeavor to unite them, and to be himself the centre of their union: instead of putting himself at the head of one party in order to govern his people, he will put himself at the head of his people in order to govern, or more properly to subdue, all parties. Now, to arrive at this desirable union, and to maintain it, will be found more difficult in some cases than in others, but absolutely impossible in none, to a wise and good prince.

IF his people are united in their submission to him, and in their attachment to the established government, he must

not only espouse but create a party, in order to govern by one: and what should tempt him to pursue so wild a measure? A prince, who aims at more power than the constitution gives him, may be so tempted; because he may hope to obtain in the disorders of the state what cannot be obtained in quiet times; and because contending parties will give what a nation will not. Parties, even before they degenerate into absolute factions, are still numbers of men associated together for certain purposes, and certain interests, which are not, or which are not allowed to be, those of the community by others. A more private or personal interest comes but too soon, and too often, to be superadded, and to grow predominant in them: and when it does so, whatever occasions or principles began to form them, the same logic prevails in them that prevails in every church. The interest of the state is supposed to be that of the party, as the interest of religion is supposed to be that of the church: and, with this pretence or prepossession, the interest of the state becomes, like that of religion, a remote consideration, is never pursued for its own sake, and is often sacrificed to the other. A king, therefore, who has ill designs to carry on, must endeavor to divide an united people; and by blending or seeming to blend his interests with that of a party, he may succeed perhaps, and his party and he may share the spoils of a ruined nation: but such a party is then become a faction, such a king is a tyrant, and such a government is a conspiracy. A PATRIOT KING must renounce his character, to have such designs; or act against his own designs, to pursue such methods. Both are too absurd to be supposed. It remains, therefore, that as all the good ends of government are most attainable in an united state, and as the divisions of a people can serve to bad purposes alone, the king we suppose here will deem the union of his subjects his greatest advantage,

tage, and will think himself happy to find that established, which he would have employed the whole labor of his life to bring about. This seems so plain, that I am ready to make excuses for having insisted at all upon it.

LET us turn ourselves to another supposition, to that of a divided state. This will fall in oftener with the ordinary course of things in free governments, and especially after iniquitous and weak administrations. Such a state may be better or worse, and the great and good purposes of a PATRIOT KING more or less attainable in it, according to the different nature of those divisions: and, therefore, we will consider this state in different lights.

A PEOPLE may be united in submission to the prince, and to the establishment, and yet be divided about general principles, or particular measures of government. In the first case, they will do by their constitution what has been frequently done by the Scripture, strain it to their own notions and prejudices; and, if they cannot strain it, alter it as much as is necessary to render it conformable to them. In the second, they will support or oppose particular acts of administrations, and defend or attack the persons employed in them: and both these ways a conflict of parties may arise, but no great difficulty to a prince who determines to pursue the union of his subjects, and the prosperity of his kingdoms independently of all parties.

WHEN parties are divided by different notions and principles concerning some particular ecclesiastical, or civil institutions, the constitution, which should be their rule, must be that of the prince. He may and he ought to shew his dislike or his favor, as he judges the constitution may be hurt or improved,

proved, by one side or the other. The hurt he is never to suffer, not for his own sake; and therefore surely not for the sake of any whimsical, factious, or ambitious set of men. The improvement he must always desire; but as every new modification in a scheme of government and of national policy is of great importance, and requires more and deeper consideration than the warmth, and hurry, and rashness of party-conduct admit, the duty of a prince seems to require that he should render by his influence the proceedings more orderly and more deliberate, even when he approves the end to which they are directed. All this may be done by him without fomenting division: and, far from forming or espousing a party, he will defeat party in defence of the constitution, on some occasions; and lead men, from acting with a party-spirit, to act with a national spirit, on others.

WHEN the division is about particular measures of government, and the conduct of the administration is alone concerned, a PATRIOT KING will stand in want of party as little as in any other case. Under his reign, the opportunities of forming an opposition of this sort will be rare, and the pretences generally weak. Nay, the motives to it will lose much of their force, when a government is strong in reputation, and men are kept in good humor by feeling the rod of a party on no occasion, tho' they feel the weight of the sceptre on some. Such opportunities, however, may happen; and there may be reason, as well as pretences, sometimes for opposition even in such a reign: at least we will suppose so, that we may include in this argument every contingent case. Grievances then are complained of, mistakes and abuses in government are pointed out, and ministers are prosecuted by their enemies. Shall the prince on the throne form a party by intrigue, and by secret and corrupt influence,

to oppose the prosecution? When the prince and the ministers are "*participes criminis*," when every thing is to be defended, lest something should come out, that may unravel the silly wicked scheme, and disclose to public sight the whole turpitude of the administration; there is no help, this must be done, and such a party must be formed, because such a party alone will submit to a drudgery of this kind. But a prince, who is not in these circumstances, will not have recourse to these means. He has others more open, more noble, and more effectual in his power: he knows that the views of his government are right, and that the tenor of his administration is good; but he knows that neither he nor his ministers are infallible, nor impeccable. There may be abuses in his government, mistakes in his administration, and guilt in his ministers, which he has not observed: and he will be far from imputing the complaints, that gave him occasion to observe them, to a spirit of party; much less will he treat those who carry on such prosecutions in a legal manner, as incendiaries, and as enemies to his government. On the contrary, he will distinguish the voice of his people from the clamor of a faction, and will hearken to it. He will redress grievances, correct errors, and reform or punish ministers. This he will do as a good prince: and as a wise one, he will do it in such a manner that his dignity shall be maintained, and that his authority shall increase, with his reputation, by it.

SHOULD the efforts of a mere faction be bent to calumniate his government, and to distress the administration on groundless pretences, and for insufficient reasons; he will not neglect, but he will not apprehend neither, the short-lived and contemptible scheme. He will indeed have no reason to do so; for let the fautors of male-administration, whenever an opposition is made to it, affect to insinuate as much as they please, that

that their masters are in no other circumstances than those to which the very best ministers stand exposed, objects of general envy and of particular malice, it will remain eternally true, that groundless opposition, in a well-regulated monarchy, can never be strong and durable. To be convinced of the truth of this proposition, one needs only to reflect how many well-grounded attacks have been defeated, and how few have succeeded, against the most wicked and the weakest administrations. Every king of Britain has means enough in his power, to defeat and to calm opposition. But a PATRIOT KING, above all others, may safely rest his cause on the innocence of his administration, on the constitutional strength of the crown, and on the concurrence of his people, to whom he dares appeal, and by whom he will be supported.

To conclude all I will say on the divisions of this kind; let me add, that the case of a groundless opposition can hardly happen in a bad reign, because in such a reign just occasions of opposition must of course be frequently given, as we have allowed that they may be given sometimes, tho' very rarely, in a good reign; but that, whether it be well or ill grounded, whether it be that of the nation, or that of a faction, the conduct of the prince with respect to it will be the same; and one way or other this conduct must have a very fatal event. Such a prince will not mend the administration, as long as he can resist the justest and most popular opposition: and, therefore, this opposition will last and grow, as long as a free constitution is in force, and the spirit of liberty is preserved; for so long even a change of his ministers, without a change of his measures, will not be sufficient. The former without the latter is a mere banter, and would be deemed and taken for such, by every man who did not oppose on a factious principle; that I mean of getting into power at any rate, and
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using it as ill, perhaps worse than the men he helped to turn out of it. Now if such men as these abound, and they will abound in the decline of a free government, a bad prince, whether he changes or does not change his ministers, may hope to govern by the spirit and art of a faction, against the spirit and strength of the nation. His character may be too low, and that of his minister too odious, to form originally even a faction that shall be able to defend them. But they may apply to their purposes a party that was formed on far different occasions, and bring numbers to fight for a cause in which many of them would not have listed. The names, and with the names the animosity of parties, may be kept up, when the causes that formed them subsist no longer.

WHEN a party is thus revived or continued in the spirit of a faction, the corrupt and the infatuated members of it will act without any regard to right or wrong: and they who have asserted liberty in one reign, or opposed invasions of one kind, will give it up in another reign, and abet invasions of another kind; tho' they still distinguish themselves by the same appellation, still spread the same banner, and still deafen their adversaries and one another with the same cry. If the national cause prevails against all the wicked arts of corruption and division, that an obstinate prince and flagitious ministry can employ; yet will the struggle be long, and the difficulties, the distresses, and the danger great, both to the king and to the people. The best he can hope for, in such a case, will be to escape with a diminution of his reputation, authority, and power. He may be exposed to something worse; and his obstinacy may force things to such extremities, as they who oppose him will lament, and as the preservation of liberty and good government can alone justify. If the wicked arts I speak of prevail, faction will be propagated through the whole nation, an ill or well grounded opposition

will be the question no longer, and the contest among parties will be, who shall govern, not, how they shall be governed. In short, universal confusion will follow, and a complete victory, on any side, will enslave all sides.

I HAVE not over-charged the draught. Such consequences must follow such a conduct: and therefore let me ask, how much more safe, more easy, more pleasant, more honorable is it, for a prince to correct, if he has not prevented, male-administration? That he may be able to rest his cause, as I said before, on the strength of the crown and the concurrence of his people, whenever any faction presumes to rise in opposition to him.

THIS a PATRIOT KING will do. He may favor one party and discourage another, upon occasions wherein the state of his kingdom makes such a temporary measure necessary: but he will espouse none, much less will he proscribe any. He will lift no party, much less will he do the meanest and most imprudent thing a king can do, lift himself in any. It will be his aim to pursue true principles of government independently of all: and, by a steady adherence to this measure, his reign will become an undeniable and glorious proof, that a wise and good prince may unite his subjects, and be himself the centre of their union, notwithstanding any of these divisions that have been hitherto mentioned.

LET US now view the divided state of a nation in another light. In this, the divisions will appear more odious, more dangerous; less dependent on the influence, and less subject to the authority of the crown. Such will be the state, whenever a people is divided about submission to their prince, and a party is formed, of spirit and strength sufficient to oppose,

oppose, even in arms, the established government. But in this case, desperate as it may seem, a PATRIOT KING will not despair of reconciling, and re-uniting his subjects to himself, and to one another. He may be obliged, perhaps, as HENRY the fourth of France was, to conquer his own; but then, like that great prince, if he is the conqueror, he will be the father too, of his people. He must pursue in arms those who presume to take arms against him; but he will pursue them like rebellious children whom he seeks to reclaim, and not like irreconcilable enemies whom he endeavors to exterminate. Another prince may blow up the flame of civil war by unprovoked severity, render those zealous against him who were at worst indifferent, and determine the disaffection of others to open rebellion. When he has prevailed against the faction he helped to form, as he could not have prevailed if the bent of the nation had been against him, he may be willing to ascribe his success to a party, that he may have that pretence to govern by a party: and, far from reconciling the minds that have been alienated from him, and re-uniting his subjects in a willing unforced submission to him, he may be content to maintain himself on that throne, where the laws of God and man have placed him, by the melancholy expedient that usurpers and tyrants, who have no other in their power, employ; the expedient of force. But a PATRIOT KING will act with another spirit, and entertain nobler and wiser views, from first to last, and thro' the whole course of such a conjuncture. Nothing less than the hearts of his people will content such a prince; nor will he think his throne established, till it is established there. That he may have time and opportunity to gain them, therefore, he will prevent the flame from breaking out, if by art and management he can do it. If he cannot, he will endeavor to keep it from spreading: and, if the phrensy of rebellion disappoints him in both these attempts,

tempts, he will remember peace, like the heroic king I just now quoted, in the midst of war. Like him he will forego advantages of pushing the latter, rather than lose an opportunity of promoting the former: like him, in the heat of battle he will spare, and in the triumph of victory condescend: like him, he will beat down the violence of this flame, by his valor, and extinguish even the embers of it, by his lenity.

It may happen, that a prince, capable of holding such a conduct as this, may not have the opportunity. He may succeed to the throne after a contrary conduct has been held: and when, among other divisions which male-administration and the tyranny of faction have increased and confirmed, there is one against the established government still in being, tho' not still in arms. The use is obvious, which a faction in power might make of such a circumstance under a weak prince, by ranking in that division all those who opposed the administration; or at least by holding out equal danger to him from two quarters, from their enemies who meant him no harm, and from his enemies who could do him none. But so gross an artifice will not impose on a prince of another character: he will soon discern the distinctions it becomes him to make. He will see, in this instance, how faction breeds, nourishes, and perpetuates faction: he will observe how far that of the court contributed to form the other, and contributes still to keep it in countenance and credit, among those who consider more what such men are against, than what they are for. He will observe, how much that of the disaffected gives pretence to the other who keeps a monopoly of power and wealth; one of which oppresses, and the other beggars, the rest of the nation. His penetration will soon discover, that these factions break in but little on the body of his people, and that it depends on him alone to take from them

them even the strength they have ; because that of the former is acquired entirely by his authority and purse, and that of the latter principally by the abuse which the former makes of both. Upon the whole, the measures he has to pursue towards the great object of a PATRIOT KING, the union of his people, will appear to him extremely easy. How should they be otherwise ? One of the factions must be dissolved, the moment that the favor of the prince is withdrawn : and the other is disarmed, as soon as it is marked out. It will have no shelter, and it must therefore be so marked out, under a good and wise administration ; for, whether the members of it avow their principles by refusing those tests of fidelity which the law requires, or perjure themselves by taking them, they will be known alike. One difference, and but one will be made between them in the general sense of mankind, a difference arising from the greater degree of infamy that will belong justly to the latter. The first may pass for fools ; the latter must pass, without excuse, for knaves.

THE terms I use sound harshly, but the censure is just : and it will appear to be so in the highest degree, and upon the highest reason, if we stop to make a reflection or two, that deserve very well to be made, on the conduct of our Jacobites ; for I desire no stronger instance on which to establish the censure, and to justify the terms I have used. Now all these, whether they swear or whether they do not, are liable to one particular objection, that did not lie against those who were, in former days, enemies to the king on the throne. In the days of York and Lancaster, for instance, a man might be against the prince on the throne, without being against the constitution of his country. The constitution conveyed the crown by hereditary right in the same family : and he who was a Yorkist, and he who was a Lancastrian, might,
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and I doubt not did, pretend in every contest to have this right on his side. The same constitution was acknowledged by both: and, therefore, so much indulgence was shewn by law to both, at least in the time of HENRY the seventh, that submission to a king "de facto" could not be imputed as a crime to either. Thus again, to descend lower in history; when the exclusion of the duke of YORK was pressed in the reign of CHARLES the second, the right of that prince to the crown was not disputed. His divine right indeed, such a divine right as his grandfather and father had asserted before him, was not much regarded; but his right by the constitution, his legal right, was sufficiently owned by those who insisted on a law as necessary to bar it. But every Jacobite, at this time, goes beyond all these examples, and is a rebel to the constitution under which he is born, as well as to the prince on the throne. The law of his country has settled the right of succession in a new family. He resists this law, and asserts, on his own private authority, not only a right in contradiction to it, but a right extinguished by it. This absurdity is so great, that it cannot be defended, except by advancing a greater: and therefore it is urged, that no power on earth could alter the constitution in this respect, nor extinguish a right to the crown inherent in the Stuart family, and derived from a superior, that is, from a divine, authority. This kind of plea for refusing submission to the laws of the land, if it was admitted, would serve any purpose as well as that for which it is brought. Our fanatics urged it formerly, and I do not see why a conscientious fifth monarchy-man had not as much right to urge it formerly, as a Jacobite has now. But if conscience, that is private opinion, may excuse the fifth monarchy-man and the Jacobite, who act conformably to it, from all imputations except those of madness and folly; how shall the latter be excused when he

He forswears the principles he retains, acknowledges the right he renounces, takes oaths with an intent to violate them, and calls God to witness to a premeditated lye? Some casuistry has been employed to excuse these men to themselves and to others. But such casuistry, and in truth every other, destroys, by distinctions and exceptions, all morality, and effaces the essential difference between right and wrong, good and evil. This the schoolmen in general have done on many occasions; the sons of LOYOLA in particular: and I wish with all my heart that nothing of the same kind could be objected to any other divines. Some political reasoning has been employed, as well as the casuistry here spoken of, and to the same purpose. It has been said, that the conduct of those who are enemies to the establishment, to which they submit and swear, is justified by the principles of the Revolution. But nothing can be more false and frivolous. By the principles of the Revolution, a subject may resist, no doubt, the prince who endeavors to ruin and enslave his people, and may push this resistance to the dethronement and exclusion of him and his race: but will it follow, that, because we may justly take arms against a prince whose right to govern we once acknowledged, and who by subsequent acts has forfeited that right, we may swear to a right we do not acknowledge, and resist a prince whose conduct has not forfeited the right we swore to, nor given any just dispensation from our oaths?

BUT I shall lengthen this digression no further: it is on a subject I have treated in public writings, the refutation of which never came to my hands, and, I think, never will. I return to the subject of my present discourse. And I say, that such factions as these can never create any obstruction to a prince who pursues the union of his subjects, nor disturb the peace of his government. The men who compose them
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must be desperate, and impotent ; the most despicable of all characters, when they go together. Every honest and sensible man will distinguish himself out of their number : and they will remain, as they deserve to be, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the rest of their fellow-subjects.

THEY will remain such, if they are abandoned to themselves, and to that habitual infatuation which they have not sense and spirit enough to break. But if a prince, out of goodness or policy, should think it worth his while to take them from under this influence, and to break these habits ; even this division, the most absurd of all others, will not be found incurable. A man who has not seen the inside of parties, nor had opportunities to examine nearly their secret motives, can hardly conceive how little a share principle of any sort, tho' principle of some sort or other be always pretended, has in the determination of their conduct. Reason has small effect on numbers. A turn of imagination, often as violent and as sudden as a gust of wind, determines their conduct : and passion is taken, by others, and by themselves too, when it grows into habit especially, for principle. What gave strength and spirit to a Jacobite party after the late king's accession ? The true answer is, a sudden turn of the imaginations of a whole party to resentment and rage, that were turned a little before to quiet submission, and patient expectation. Principle had as little share in making the turn, as reason had in conducting it. Men who had sense, and temper too, before that moment, thought of nothing, after it, but of setting up a tory king against a whig king : and when some of them were asked, if they were sure a popish king would make a good tory king ? or whether they were determined to sacrifice their religion and liberty to him ? the answer was, No ; that they would take arms against him if he made attempts
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on either ; that this might be the case, perhaps, in six months after his restoration, but that, in the mean time, they would endeavor his restoration. This is no exaggerated fact : and I leave all men to judge, to what such sentiments and conduct must be ascribed, to principle or passion, to reason or madness ? What gives obstinacy without strength, and sullenness without spirit, to the Jacobite-tories at this time ? Another turn of imagination, or rather the same shewing itself in another form ; a factious habit, and a factious notion, converted into a notion of policy and honor. They are taught to believe, that by clinging together they are a considerable weight, which may be thrown in to turn the scale in any great event ; and that in the mean time, to be a steady suffering party is an honor they may flatter themselves with very justly. Thus, they continue steady to engagements which most of them wish in their hearts they had never taken ; and suffer for principles, in support of which not one of them would venture further, than talking the treason that claret inspires.

It results, therefore, from all that has been said, and from the reflections which these hints may suggest, that in whatever light we view the divided state of a people, there is none in which these divisions will appear incurable, nor an union of the members of a great community with one another, and with their head, unattainable. It may happen in this case as it does in many others, that things uncommon may pass for improbable or impossible : and, as nothing can be more uncommon than a PATRIOT KING, there will be no room to wonder if the natural and certain effects of his conduct should appear improbable or impossible to many. But there is still something more in this case. Tho' the union we speak of be so much for the interest of every king and every people, that their glory and their prosperity must in-

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crease, or diminish, in proportion as they approach nearer to it, or are further removed from it; yet is there another interest, by which princes and people both are often imposed upon so far, as to mistake it for their own. The interest I mean, is that of private ambition. It would be easy to shew in many instances, and particularly in this, of uniting instead of dividing, and of governing by a national concurrence instead of governing by the management of parties and factions in the state, how widely different, nay how repugnant, the interests of private ambition and those of real patriotism are. Men, therefore, who are warmed by the first, and have no sense of the last, will declare for division, as they do for corruption, in opposition to union and to integrity of government. They will not indeed declare directly, that the two former are in the abstract preferable; but they will affirm, with great airs of sufficiency, that both are incurable; and conclude from hence, that in practice it is necessary to comply with both. This subterfuge once open, there is no false and immoral measure, in political management, which may not be avowed and recommended. But the very men, who hope to escape by opening it, shut it up again, and secure their own condemnation, when they labor to confirm divisions, and to propagate corruption, and thereby to create the very necessity that they plead in their excuse. Necessity of this kind there is in reality none; for it seems full as absurd to say, that popular divisions must be cultivated, because popular union cannot be procured, as it would be to say that poison must be poured into a wound, because it cannot be healed. The practice of morality, in private life, will never arrive at ideal perfection: must we give up ourselves, therefore, to all manner of immorality? and must those who are charged with our instruction endeavor to make us the most profligate of men, because they cannot make us saints?

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EXPERIENCE of the depravity of human nature made men desirous to unite in society and under government, that they might defend themselves the better against injuries : but the same depravity soon inspired to some the design of employing societies to invade and spoil societies ; and to disturb the peace of the great commonwealth of mankind, with more force and effect in such collective bodies, than they could do individually. Just so it happens in the domestic œconomy of particular states : and their peace is disturbed by the same passions. Some of their members content themselves with the common benefits of society, and employ all their industry to promote the public good : but some propose to themselves a separate interest ; and, that they may pursue it the more effectually, they associate with others. Thus factions are in them, what nations are in the world ; they invade and rob one another : and, while each pursues a separate interest, the common interest is sacrificed by them all : that of mankind in one case, that of some particular community in the other. This has been, and must always be, in some measure, the course of human affairs, especially in free countries, where the passions of men are less restrained by authority : and I am not wild enough to suppose that a PATRIOT KING can change human nature. But I am reasonable enough to suppose, that, without altering human nature, he may give a check to this course of human affairs, in his own kingdom at least ; that he may defeat the designs, and break the spirit of faction, instead of partaking in one, and assuming the other ; and that, if he cannot render the union of his subjects universal, he may render it so general as to answer all the ends of good government, private security, public tranquillity, wealth, power, and fame.

IF these ends were ever answered, they were so, surely, in this country, in the days of our ELIZABETH. She found her kingdoms full of factions, and factions of another consequence and danger than these of our days, whom she would have dispersed with a puff of her breath. She could not re-unite them, it is true: the papist continued a papist, the puritan a puritan; one furious, the other sullen. But she united the great body of the people in her and their common interest, she inflamed them with one national spirit: and, thus armed, she maintained tranquillity at home, and carried succour to her friends and terror to her enemies abroad. There were cabals at her court, and intrigues among her ministers. It is said too, that she did not dislike that there should be such. But these were kept within her court. They could not creep abroad, to sow division among her people: and her greatest favorite the earl of ESSEX paid the price of attempting it with his head. Let our great doctors in politics, who preach so learnedly on the trite text "Divide et impera," compare the conduct of ELIZABETH in this respect with that of her successor, who endeavored to govern his kingdom by the notions of a faction that he raised, and to manage his parliament by undertakers: and they must be very obstinate indeed, if they refuse to acknowledge, that a wise and good prince can unite a divided people, tho' a weak and wicked prince cannot; and that the consequences of national union are glory and happiness to the prince and to the people; whilst those of dis-union bring shame and misery on both, and entail them too on posterity.

I HAVE dwelt long on the last head, not only because it is of great importance in itself, and at all times, but because it is rendered more so than ever at this time, by the unexampled

amplified avowal of contrary principles. Hitherto it has been thought the highest pitch of profligacy to own, instead of concealing, crimes; and to take pride in them, instead of being ashamed of them. But in our age men have soared to a pitch still higher. The first is common, it is the practice of numbers, and by their numbers they keep one another in countenance. But the choice spirits of these days, the men of mode in politics, are far from stopping where criminals of all kinds have stopt, when they have gone even to this point; for generally the most hardened of the inhabitants of Newgate do not go so far. The men I speak of contend, that it is not enough to be vicious by practice and habit, but that it is necessary to be so by principle. They make themselves missionaries of faction as well as of corruption: they recommend both, they deride all such as imagine it possible, or fit, to retain truth, integrity, and a disinterested regard to the public in public life, and pronounce every man a fool who is not ready to act like a knave. I hope that enough has been said, tho' much more might have been said, to expose the wickedness of these men, and the absurdity of their schemes; and to shew that a PATRIOT KING may walk more easily and successfully in other paths of government, "*per tutum plarumque iter religionis, justitiæ, honestatis, virtutumque moralium.*" Let me proceed, therefore, to mention two other heads of the conduct that such a king will hold, and it shall be my endeavor not to fall into the same prolixity.

A KING who esteems it his duty to support, or to restore, if that be needful, the free constitution of a limited monarchy; who forms and maintains a wise and good administration; who subdues faction, and promotes the union of his people: and who makes their greatest good the constant object of his government, may be said, no doubt, to be

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in the true interest of his kingdom. All the particular cases, that can arise, are included in these general characteristics of a wise and good reign. And yet it seems proper to mention, under a distinct head, some particular instances that have not been touched, wherein this wisdom and goodness will exert themselves.

Now, tho' the true interest of several states may be the same in many respects, yet is there always some difference to be perceived, by a discerning eye, both in these interests, and in the manner of pursuing them; a difference that arises from the situation of countries, from the character of people, from the nature of government, and even from that of climate and soil; from circumstances that are, like these, permanent, and from others that may be deemed more accidental. To illustrate all this by examples, would be easy, but long. I shall content myself therefore to mention, in some instances only, the difference that arises, from the causes referred to, between the true interest of our country, and that of some or all our neighbors on the continent: and leave others to extend and apply in their own thoughts the comparison I shall hint at, rather than enlarge upon.

• The situation of Great Britain, the character of her people, and the nature of her government, fit her for trade and commerce. Her climate and her soil make them necessary to her well-being. By trade and commerce we grow a rich and powerful nation, and by their decay we are growing poor and impotent. As trade and commerce enrich, so they fortify, our country. The sea is our barrier, ships are our fortresses, and the mariners, that trade and commerce alone can furnish, are the garrisons to defend them. France lies under great disadvantages in trade and commerce, by the nature of her govern-

government. Her advantages, in situation, are as great at least as ours. Those that arise, from the temper and character of her people, are a little different perhaps, and yet upon the whole equivalent. Those of her climate and her soil are superior to ours, and indeed to those of any European nation. The United Provinces have the same advantages that we have in the nature of their government, more perhaps in the temper and character of their people, less to be sure in their situation, climate, and soil. But, without descending into a longer detail of the advantages and disadvantages attending each of these nations in trade and commerce, it is sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that Great Britain stands in a certain middle between the other two, with regard to wealth and power arising from these springs. A less, and a less constant, application to the improvement of these may serve the ends of France; a greater is necessary in this country; and a greater still in Holland. The French may improve their natural wealth and power by the improvement of trade and commerce. We can have no wealth, nor power by consequence, as Europe is now constituted, without the improvement of them, nor in any degree but proportionably to this improvement. The Dutch cannot subsist without them. They bring wealth to other nations, and are necessary to the well-being of them; but they supply the Dutch with food and raiment, and are necessary even to their being.

THE result of what has been said is, in general, that the wealth and power of all nations depending so much on their trade and commerce, and every nation being, like the three I have mentioned, in such different circumstances of advantage or disadvantage in the pursuit of this common interest; a good government, and therefore the government of

a PATRIOT KING, will be directed constantly to make the most of every advantage that nature has given, or art can procure, towards the improvement of trade and commerce. And this is one of the principal criterions by which we are to judge, whether governors are in the true interest of the people or not.

It results, in particular, that great Britain might improve her wealth and power in a proportion superior to that of any nation who can be deemed her rival, if the advantages she has were as wisely cultivated, as they will be in the reign of a PATRIOT KING. To be convinced more thoroughly of this truth, a very short process of reasoning will suffice. Let any man, who has knowledge enough for it, first compare the natural state of Great Britain, and of the United Provinces, and then their artificial state together; that is, let him consider minutely the advantages we have by the situation, extent, and nature of our island, over the inhabitants of a few salt marshes gained on the sea, and hardly defended from it: and after that, let him consider how nearly these provinces have raised themselves to an equality of wealth and power with the kingdom of Great Britain. From whence arises this difference of improvement? It arises plainly from hence: the Dutch have been, from the foundation of their commonwealth, a nation of patriots and merchants. The spirit of that people has not been diverted from these two objects, the defence of their liberty, and the improvement of their trade and commerce: which have been carried on by them with uninterrupted and unslackened application, industry, order, and œconomy. In Great Britain the case has not been the same, in either respect; but here we confine ourselves to speak of the last alone.

TRADE

TRADE and commerce, such as they were in those days, had been sometimes, and in some instances, before the reign of Queen ELIZABETH, encouraged and improved: but the great encouragements were given, the great extensions and improvements were made, by that glorious princess. To her we owe that spirit of domestic and foreign trade which is not quite extinguished. It was she who gave that rapid motion to our whole mercantile system which is not entirely ceased. They both flagged under her successor; were not revived under his son; were checked, diverted, clogged, and interrupted, during our civil wars: and began to exert new vigor after the restoration, in a long course of peace; but met with new difficulties, too, from the confirmed rivalry of the Dutch, and the growing rivalry of the French. To one of these the pusillanimous character of JAMES the first gave many scandalous occasions: and the other was favored by the conduct of CHARLES the second, who never was in the true interest of the people he governed. From the revolution to the death of queen ANNE, however trade and commerce might be aided and encouraged in other respects, they were necessarily subjected to depredations abroad, and overloaded by taxes at home, during the course of two great wars. From the accession of the late king to this hour, in the midst of a full peace, the debts of the nation continue much the same, the taxes have been increased, and for eighteen years of this time we have tamely suffered continual depredations from the most contemptible maritime power in Europe, that of Spain.

A PATRIOT KING will neither neglect, nor sacrifice his country's interest. No other interest, neither a foreign nor a domestic, neither a public nor a private, will influence his conduct in government. He will not multiply taxes wantonly

tonly, nor keep up those unnecessarily which necessity has laid, that he may keep up legions of tax-gatherers. He will not continue national debts, by all sorts of political and other profusion; nor, more wickedly still, by a settled purpose of oppressing and impoverishing the people; that he may with greater ease corrupt some, and govern the whole, according to the dictates of his passions and arbitrary will. To give ease and encouragement to manufactory at home, to assist and protect trade abroad, to improve and keep in heart the national colonies, like so many farms of the mother country, will be principal and constant parts of the attention of such a prince. The wealth of the nation he will most justly esteem to be his wealth, the power his power, the security and the honor, his security and honor; and, by the very means by which he promotes the two first, he will wisely preserve the two last; for by these means, and by these alone, can the great advantage of the situation of this kingdom be taken and improved.

GREAT BRITAIN is an island: and, whilst nations on the continent are at immense charge in maintaining their barriers, and perpetually on their guard, and frequently embroiled, to extend or strengthen them, Great Britain may, if her governors please, accumulate wealth in maintaining hers; make herself secure from invasions, and be ready to invade others when her own immediate interest, or the general interest of Europe, requires it. Of all which queen ELIZABETH's reign is a memorable example, and undeniable proof. I said the general interest of Europe; because it seems to me that this, alone, should call our councils off from an almost entire application to their domestic and proper business. Other nations must watch over every motion of their neighbors; penetrate, if they can, every design; foresee every minute event; and take

take part by some engagement or other in almost every conjuncture that arises. But as we cannot be easily nor suddenly attacked, and as we ought not to aim at any acquisition of territory on the continent, it may be our interest to watch the secret workings of the several councils abroad; to advise, and warn; to abet, and oppose; but it never can be our true interest easily and officiously to enter into action, much less into engagements that imply action and expence. Other nations, like the Velites or light-armed troops, stand foremost in the field, and skirmish perpetually. When a great war begins, we ought to look on the powers of the continent, to whom we incline, like the two first lines, the Principes and Hastati of a Roman army: and on ourselves, like the Triarii, that are not to charge with these legions on every occasion, but to be ready for the conflict whenever the fortune of the day, be it sooner or later, calls us to it, and the sum of things, or the general interest, makes it necessary.

THIS is that post of advantage and honor, which our singular situation among the powers of Europe determines us, or should determine us, to take, in all disputes that happen on the continent. If we neglect it, and dissipate our strength on occasions that touch us remotely or indirectly, we are governed by men who do not know the true interest of this island, or who have some other interest more at heart. If we adhere to it, so at least as to deviate little and seldom from it, as we shall do whenever we are wisely and honestly governed, then will this nation make her proper figure: and a great one it will be. By a continual attention to improve her natural, that is her maritime strength, by collecting all her forces within herself, and reserving them to be laid out on great occasions, such as regard her immediate interests and her honor, or such as are truly important to the general system

of power in Europe; she may be the arbitrator of differences, the guardian of liberty, and the preserver of that balance, which has been so much talked of, and is so little understood.

“ARE we never to be soldiers?” it will be said. Yes, constantly, in such proportion as is necessary for the defence of good government. To establish such a military force as none but bad governors can want, is to establish tyrannical power in the king or in the ministers; and may be wanted by the latter, when the former would be secure without his army, if he broke his minister. Occasionally too we must be soldiers, and for offence as well as defence; but in proportion to the nature of the conjuncture, considered always relatively to the difference here insisted upon between our situation, our interest, and the nature of our strength, compared with those of the other powers of Europe; and not in proportion to the desires, or even to the wants, of the nations with whom we are confederated. Like other amphibious animals, we must come occasionally on shore: but the water is more properly our element, and in it, like them, as we find our greatest security, so we exert our greatest force.

WHAT I touch upon here, very shortly, deserves to be considered, and re-considered, by every man who has, or may have, any share in the government of Great Britain. For we have not only departed too much from our true national interest in this respect; but we have done so with the general applause even of well-meaning men, who did not discern that we wasted ourselves by an improper application of our strength in conjunctures when we might have served the common cause far more usefully, nay with entire effect, by a proper application of our natural strength. There was some-

something more than this. Armies grew so much into fashion, in time of war, among men who meant well to their country, that they who mean ill to it have kept, and keep them still up in the profoundest peace: and the number of our soldiers, in this island alone, is almost double to that of our seamen. That they are kept up against foreign enemies, cannot be said with any color. If they are kept for shew, they are ridiculous; if they are kept for any other purpose whatever, they are too dangerous to be suffered. A PATRIOT KING, seconded by ministers attached to the true interest of their country, would soon reform this abuse, and save a great part of this expence; or apply it, in a manner preferable even to the saving it, to the maintenance of a body of marine foot, and to the charge of a register of thirty or forty thousand seamen. But no thoughts like these, no great designs for the honor and interest of the kingdom, will be entertained, till men who have this honor and interest at heart arise to power.

I COME now to the last head under which I shall consider the character and conduct of a PATRIOT KING: and let it not be thought to be of the least importance, tho' it may seem, at the first mention, to concern appearances rather than realities, and to be nothing more than a circumstance contained in or implied by the great parts of the character and conduct of such a king. It is of his personal behavior, of his manner of living with other men, and, in a word, of his private as well as public life that I mean to speak. It is of that decency and grace, that bienséance of the French, that decorum of the Latins, that *πρεπον* of the Greeks, which can never be reflected on any character that is not laid in virtue: but for want of which, a character that is so laid will lose, at all times, part of the lustre belonging to it, and may be sometimes not a little misunderstood and undervalued. Beauty is not separable from health, nor this lustre, said the Stoics,
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from virtue : but as a man may be healthful without being handsome, so he may be virtuous without being amiable.

THERE are certain finishing strokes, a last hand as we commonly say, to be given to all the works of art. When that is not given, we may see the excellency of a general design, and the beauty of some particular parts. A judge of the art may see further; he may allow for what is wanting, and discern the full merit of a complete work in one that is imperfect. But vulgar eyes will not be so struck. The work will appear to them defective, because unfinished : so that without knowing precisely what they dislike, they may admire, but they will not be pleased. Thus in moral characters, tho' every part be virtuous and great, or tho' the few and small defects in it be concealed under the blaze of those shining qualities that compensate for them ; yet is not this enough even in private life : it is less so in public life, and still less so in that of a prince.

THERE is a certain "species liberalis," more easily understood than explained, and felt than defined, that must be acquired and rendered habitual to him. A certain propriety of words and actions, that results from their conformity to nature and character, must always accompany him, and create an air and manner that run uniformly thro' the whole tenor of his conduct and behaviour: which air and manner are so far from any kind or degree of affectation, that they cannot be attained except by him who is void of all affectation. We may illustrate this to ourselves, and make it more sensible, by reflecting on the conduct of good dramatic or epic writers. They draw the characters,* which they bring on the scene, from nature, they sustain them thro' the whole piece, and make their actors neither say nor do any thing that is not exactly proper to the character each of them represents. "Ode-
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"rint dum metuant," came properly out of the mouth of a tyrant; but EURIPIDES would never have put that execrable sentence into the mouth of MINOS or ÆACUS.

A MAN of sense and virtue both will not fall into any great impropriety of character, or indecency of conduct: but he may slide or be surpris'd into small ones, from a thousand reasons, and in a thousand manners, which I shall not stay to enumerate. Against these, therefore, even men, who are incapable of falling into the others, must be still on their guard, and no men so much as princes. When their minds are filled and their hearts warmed with true notions of government, when they know their duty, and love their people, they will not fail in the great parts they are to act, in the council, in the field, and in all the arduous affairs that belong to their kingly office: at least they will not begin to fail, by failing in them. But as they are men susceptible of the same impressions, liable to the same errors, and exposed to the same passions, so they are likewise exposed to more and stronger temptations than others. Besides, the elevation in which they are placed, as it gives them great advantages, gives them great disadvantages too, that often countervail the former. Thus, for instance, a little merit in a prince is seen and felt by numbers: it is multiplied, as it were, and in proportion to this effect his reputation is raised by it. But then, a little failing is seen and felt by numbers too: it is multiplied in the same manner, and his reputation sinks in the same proportion.

I SPOKE above of defects that may be concealed under the blaze of great and shining qualities. This may be the case: it has been that of some princes. There goes a tradition that HENRY the fourth of France asked a Spanish ambassador, what

what mistresses the king of Spain had? The ambassador replied, like a formal pedant, that his master was a prince who feared God, and had no mistress but the queen. HENRY the fourth felt the reflection, and asked him in return, with some contempt, "Whether his master had not virtues enough "to cover one vice?"

THE faults or defects, that may be thus covered or compensated, are, I think, those of the man, rather than those of the king; such as arise from constitution, and the natural rather than the moral character; such as may be deemed accidental starts of passion, or accidental remissness in some unguarded hours; surprises, if I may say so, of the man on the king. When these happen seldom, and pass soon, they may be hid like spots in the sun: but they are spots still. He who has the means of seeing them, will see them: and he who has not, may feel the effects of them without knowing precisely the cause. When they continue (for here is the danger, because, if they continue, they will increase) they are spots no longer: they spread a general shade, and obscure the light in which they were drowned before. The virtues of the king are lost in the vices of the man.

ALEXANDER had violent passions, and those for wine and women were predominant, after his ambition. They were spots in his character before they prevailed by the force of habit: as soon as they began to do so, the king and the hero appeared less, the rake and bully more. Persopolis was burnt at the instigation of THAIS, and CLYTUS was killed in a drunken brawl. He repented indeed of these two horrible actions, and was again the king and hero upon many occasions; but he had not been enough on his guard, when the strongest incitements to vanity and to sensual pleasures offered themselves

themselves at every moment to him : and, when he stood in all his easy hours surrounded by women and eunuchs, by the pandars, parasites, and buffoons of a voluptuous court, they, who could not approach the king, approached the man, and by seducing the man, they betrayed the king. His faults became habits. The Macedonians, who did not or would not see the one, saw the other ; and he fell a sacrifice to their resentments, to their fears, and to those factions that will arise under an odious government, as well as under one that grows into contempt.

OTHER characters might be brought to contrast with this ; the first SCIPIO AFRICANUS, for example, or the eldest CATO : and there will be no objection to a comparison of such citizens of Rome, as these were, with kings of the first magnitude. Now the reputation of the first SCIPIO was not so clear and uncontroverted in private as in public life ; nor was he allow'd by all, to be a man of such severe virtue, as he affected, and as that age required. NÆVIUS was thought to mean him in some verses GELLIUS has preserved : and VALERIUS ANTIAS made no scruple to assert, that, far from restoring the fair Spaniard to her family, he debauched and kept her. Notwithstanding this, what authority did he not maintain ? In what esteem and veneration did he not live and die ? With what panegyrics has not the whole torrent of writers rolled down his reputation even to these days ? This could not have happened, if the vice imputed to him had shewn itself in any scandalous appearances, to eclipse the lustre of the general, the consul, or the citizen. The same reflection might be extended to CATO, who loved wine as well as SCIPIO loved women. Men did not judge in the days of the elder CATO perhaps, as SENECA was ready to do in those of the younger, that drunkenness could be no crime if CATO drank :

but CATO's passion, as well as that of SCIPIO, was subdued and kept under by his public character. His virtue warmed, instead of cooling, by this indulgence to his genius or natural temper: and one may gather, from what TULLY puts into his mouth, in the treatise concerning Old age, that even his love of wine was rendered subservient, instead of doing hurt, to the measures he pursued in his public character.

GIVE me leave to insist a little on the two first CÆSARS, and on MARC ANTONY. I quote none of them as good men, but I may quote them all as great men, and therefore properly in this place; since a PATRIOT KING must avoid the defects that diminish a great character, as well as those that corrupt a good one. Old CURIO called JULIUS CÆSAR the husband of every wife, and the wife of every husband; referring to his known adulteries, and to the compliances that he was suspected of in his youth for NICOMEDES. Even his own soldiers, in the licence of a triumph, sung lampoons on him for his profusion as well as lewdness. The youth of AUGUSTUS was defamed as much as that of JULIUS CÆSAR, and both as much as that of ANTONY. When Rome was ransacked by the pandars of AUGUSTUS, and matrons and virgins were stripped and searched, like slaves in a market, to chuse the fittest to satisfy his lust, did ANTONY do more? When JULIUS set no bounds to his debauches in Egypt, except those that satiety imposed, "*postquam epulis bacchoque modum lassata voluptas imposuit*," when he trifled away his time with CLEOPATRA in the very crisis of the civil war, and till his troops refused to follow him any further in his effeminate progress up the Nile---did ANTONY do more? No; all three had vices which would have been so little borne in any former age of Rome, that no man could have raised himself, under the weight of them, to popularity and to power. But we must
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not wonder that the people, who bore the tyrants, bore the libertines; nor that indulgence was shewn to the vices of the great, in a city where universal corruption and profligacy of manners were established: and yet even in this city, and among these degenerate Romans, certain it is, that different appearances, with the same vices, helped to maintain the CÆSARS, and ruined ANTONY. I might produce many anecdotes to shew how the two former saved appearances whilst their vices were the most flagrant, and made so much amends for the appearances they had not saved, by those of a contrary kind, that a great part at least of all which was said to defame them might pass, and did pass, for the calumny of party.

BUT ANTONY threw off all decorum from the first, and continued to do so to the last. Not only vice, but indecency became habitual to him. He ceased to be a general, a consul, a triumvir, a citizen of Rome. He became an Egyptian king, sunk into luxurious effeminacy, and proved he was unfit to govern men, by suffering himself to be governed by a woman. His vices hurt him, but his habits ruined him. If a political modesty at least had made him disguise the first, they would have hurt him less, and he might have escaped the last: but he was so little sensible of this, that in a fragment of one of his letters to AUGUSTUS, which SÜETONIUS has preserved, he endeavors to justify himself by pleading this very habit. "What matter is it whom we lie with?" says he: "this letter may find you perhaps with TERTULLA, or TERENTILIA," or others that he names. "I lie with CLEOPATRA, and have I not done so these nine years?"

THESE great examples, which I have produced, not to encourage vice, but to shew more strongly the advantages of decency in private behavior, may appear in some sort figures

bigger than the life. Few virtues and few vices grow up, in these parts of the world and these latter ages, to the size of those I have mentioned ; and none have such scenes wherein to exert themselves. But the truths I am desirous to inculcate will be as justly delivered in this manner, and perhaps more strongly felt. Failings or vices that flow from the same source of human nature, that run the same course thro' the conduct of princes, and have the same effects on their characters, and consequently on their government and their fortune, have all the proportion necessary to my application of them. It matters little, whether a prince, who abandons that common decorum which results from nature and which reason prescribes, abandons the particular decorums of this country or that, of this age or that, which result from mode, and which custom exacts. It matters little, for instance, whether a prince gives himself up to the more gross luxury of the west, or to the more refined luxury of the east ; whether he become the slave of a domestic harlot, or of a foreign queen ; in short, whether he forget himself in the arms of one whore or of twenty ; and whether he imitate ANTONY, or a king of Achin, who is reported to have passed his whole time in a feraglio, eating, drinking, chewing betel, playing with women, and talking of cock-fighting.

To sum up the whole and draw to a conclusion : this decency, this grace, this propriety of manners to character, is so essential to princes in particular, that whenever it is neglected, their virtues lose a great degree of lustre, and their defects acquire much aggravation. Nay more ; by neglecting this decency and this grace, and for want of a sufficient regard to appearances, even their virtues may betray them into failings, their failings into vices, and their vices into habits unworthy of princes and unworthy of men.

THE constitutions of governments, and the different tempers and characters of people, may be thought justly to deserve some consideration, in determining the behavior of princes in private life as well as in public ; and to put a difference, for instance, between the decorum of a king of France, and that of a king of Great Britain.

LEWIS the fourteenth was king in an absolute monarchy, and reigned over a people whose genius makes it as fit perhaps to impose on them by admiration and awe, as to gain and hold them by affection. Accordingly he kept great state ; was haughty, was reserved ; and all he said or did appeared to be forethought and planned. His regard to appearances was such, that when his mistress was the wife of another man, and he had children by her every year, he endeavored to cover her constant residence at court by a place she filled about the queen : and he dined and supped and cohabited with the latter in every apparent respect as if he had had no mistress at all. Thus he raised a great reputation ; he was revered by his subjects, and admired by his neighbors : and this was due principally to the art with which he managed appearances, so as to set off his virtues, to disguise his failings and his vices, and by his example and authority to keep a veil drawn over the futility and debauch of his court.

His successor, not to the throne, but to the sovereign power, was a mere rake, with some wit, and no morals ; nay, with so little regard to them, that he made them a subject of ridicule in discourse, and appeared in his whole conduct more profligate, if that could be, than he was in principle. The difference between these characters soon appeared in abominable effects ; such as, cruelty apart, might recal the memory of
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of Nero, or, in the other sex, that of MESSALINA, and such as I leave the chroniclers of scandal to relate.

Our ELIZABETH was queen in a limited monarchy, and reigned over a people at all times more easily led than driven; and at that time capable of being attached to their prince and their country, by a more generous principle than any of those which prevail in our days, by affection. There was a strong prerogative then in being, and the crown was in possession of greater legal power. Popularity was, however, then, as it is now, and as it must be always in mixed government, the sole true foundation of that sufficient authority and influence, which other constitutions give the prince gratis, and independently of the people, but which a king of this nation must acquire. The wise queen saw it, and she saw too, how much popularity depends on those appearances, that depend on the decorum, the decency, the grace, and the propriety of behavior of which we are speaking. A warm concern for the interest and honor of the nation, a tenderness for her people, and a confidence in their affections, were appearances that ran thro' her whole public conduct, and gave life and color to it. She did great things, and she knew how to set them off according to their full value, by her manner of doing them. In her private behavior she shewed great affability, she descended even to familiarity; but her familiarity was such as could not be imputed to her weakness, and was, therefore, most justly ascribed to her goodness. Tho' a woman, she hid all that was womanish about her: and if a few equivocal marks of coquetry appeared on some occasions, they passed like flashes of lightning, vanished as soon as they were discerned, and imprinted no blot on her character. She had private friendships, she had favorites: but she never suffered

ferred her friends to forget she was their queen ; and when her favorites did, she made them feel that she was so.

HER successor had no virtues to set off, but he had failings and vices to conceal. He could not conceal the latter ; and, void of the former, he could not compensate for them. His failings and his vices therefore standing in full view, he passed for a weak prince and an ill man ; and fell into all the contempt wherein his memory remains to this day. The methods he took, to preserve himself from it, served but to confirm him in it. No man can keep the decorum of manners in life, who is not free from every kind of affectation, as it has been said already : but he who affects what he has no pretensions to, or what is improper to his character and rank in the world, is guilty of most consummate folly ; he becomes doubly ungracious, doubly indecent, and quite ridiculous. JAMES the first, not having one quality to conciliate the esteem or affection of his people to him, endeavored to impose on their understandings ; and to create a respect for himself, by spreading the most extravagant notions about kings in general, as if they were middle beings between God and other men ; and by comparing the extent and unsearchable mysteries of their power and prerogative to those of the divine providence. His language and his behavior were commonly suited to such foolish pretensions ; and thus, by assuming a claim to such respect and submission as were not due to him, he lost a great part of what was due to him. In short, he begun at the wrong end ; for tho' the shining qualities of the king may cover some failings and some vices that do not grow up to strong habits in the man, yet must the character of a great and good king be founded in that of a great and good man. A king who lives out of the sight of his subjects, or is never seen by them except on his throne, can scarce be despised as a man, tho' he may be hated as a king. But the king who lives more in their sight, and

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more under their observation, may be despised before he is hated, and even without being hated. This happened to king JAMES : a thousand circumstances brought it to pass, and none more than the indecent weakneses he had for his minions. He did not endeavor to cure this contempt and raise his character, only by affecting what he had no pretensions to, as in the former case ; but he endeavored likewise most vainly to do it by affecting what was improper to his character and rank. He did not endeavor indeed to disguise his natural pusillanimity and timidity under the mask of a bully, whilst he was imposed upon and insulted by all his neighbors, and above all by the Spaniards ; but he retailed the scraps of BUCHANAN, affected to talk much, figured in church controversies, and put on all the pedantic appearances of a scholar, whilst he neglected all those of a great and good man, as well as king.

LET not princes flatter themselves. They will be examined closely, in private as well as in public life : and those, who cannot pierce further, will judge of them by the appearances they give in both. To obtain true popularity, that which is founded in esteem and affection, they must, therefore, maintain their characters in both ; and to that end neglect appearances in neither, but observe the decorum necessary to preserve the esteem, whilst they win the affections of mankind. Kings, they must never forget that they are men : men, they must never forget that they are kings. The sentiments, which one of these reflections of course inspires, will give a humane and affable air to their whole behavior, and make them taste in that high elevation all the joys of social life. The sentiments, that the other reflection suggests, will be found very compatible with the former : and they may never forget that they are kings, tho' they do not always carry the crown on their heads, nor the sceptre in their hands. Vanity and folly must

must entrench themselves in a constant affectation of state, to preserve regal dignity: a wise prince will know how to preserve it when he lays his majesty aside. He will dare to appear a private man, and in that character he will draw to himself a respect less ostentatious, but more real and more pleasing to him, than any which is paid to the monarch. By never saying what is unfit for him to say, he will never hear what is unfit for him to hear. By never doing what is unfit for him to do, he will never see what is unfit for him to see. Decency and propriety of manners are so far from lessening the pleasures of life, that they refine them, and give them an higher taste: they are so far from restraining the free and easy commerce of social life, that they banish the bane of it, licentiousness of behavior. Ceremony is the barrier against this abuse of liberty in public; politeness and decency are so in private: and the prince, who practises and exacts them, will amuse himself much better, and oblige those, who have the honor to be in his intimacy and to share his pleasures with him, much more, than he could possibly do by the most absolute and unguarded familiarity.

THAT which is here recommended to princes, that constant guard on their own behavior even in private life, and that constant decorum which their example ought to exact from others, will not be found so difficult in practice as may be imagined; if they use a proper discernment in the choice of the persons whom they admit to the nearest degrees of intimacy with them. A prince should chuse his companions with as great care as his ministers. If he trusts the business of his state to these, he trusts his character to those: and his character will depend on theirs much more than is commonly thought. General experience will lead men to judge that a similitude of character determined the choice; even when

chance, indulgence to assiduity, good-nature, or want of reflection, had their share in the introduction of men unworthy of such favor. But, in such cases, certain it is that they, who judged wrong at first concerning him, will judge right at last. He is not a trifler, for instance. Be it so: but if he takes trifling futile creatures, men of mean characters, or of no character, into his intimacy, he shews a disposition to become such; and will become such, unless he breaks these habits early, and before puerile amusements are grown up to be the business of his life. I mean, that the minds of princes, like the minds of other men, will be brought down insensibly to the tone of the company they keep.

A worse consequence, even than this, may follow a want of discernment in princes how to chuse their companions, and how to conduct themselves in private life. Silly kings have resigned themselves to their ministers, have suffered these to stand between them and their people, and have formed no judgments, nor taken any measures on their own knowledge, but all implicitly on the representations made to them by their ministers. Kings of superior capacity have resigned themselves in the same manner to their favorites, male and female, have suffered these to stand between them and their most able and faithful counsellors: their judgments have been influenced, and their measures directed by insinuations of women, or of men as little fitted as women, by nature and education, to be hearkened to, in the great affairs of government. History is full of such examples; all melancholy, many tragical! sufficient, one would imagine, to deter princes, if attended to, from permitting the companions of their idle hours, or the instruments of their pleasures, to exceed the bounds of those provinces. Should a minister of state pretend to vie with any of these, about the forms of a drawing-room,

room, the regulation of a ruelle, the decoration of a ball, or the dress of a fine lady, he would be thought ridiculous, and he would be truly so. But then are not any of these impertinent, when they presume to meddle in things at least as much above them, as those that have been mentioned are below the others? And are not princes, who suffer them to do so, unaccountably weak?

WHAT shall I say further on this head? Nothing more is necessary. Let me wind it up, therefore, by asserting this great truth, that results from what has been already said: As he can never fill the character of a PATRIOT KING, tho' his personal great and good qualities be in every other respect equal to it, who lies open to the flattery of courtiers, to the seduction of women, and to the partialities and affections which are easily contracted by too great indulgence in private life; so the prince, who is desirous to establish this character, must observe such a decorum, and keep such a guard on himself, as may prevent even the suspicion of being liable to such influences. For as the reality would ruin, the very suspicion will lessen him in the opinion of mankind: and the opinion of mankind, which is same after death, is superior strength and power in life.

AND now, if the principles and measures of conduct, laid down in this discourse, as necessary to constitute that greatest and most glorious of human beings, a PATRIOT KING, be sufficient to this purpose; let us consider, too, how easy it is, or ought to be, to establish them in the minds of princes. They are founded on true propositions, all of which are obvious, nay, many of them self-evident. They are confirmed by universal experience. In a word, no understanding can resist them, and none but the weakest can fail, or be misled, in the application of them. To a prince, whose heart is cor-

rupt, it is in vain to speak : and, for such a prince, I would not be thought to write. But if the heart of a prince be not corrupt, these truths will find an easy ingression, thro' the understanding, to it. Let us consider again, what the sure, the necessary effects of such principles and measures of conduct must be, to the prince, and to the people. On this subject let the imagination range thro' the whole glorious scene of a patriot reign: the beauty of the idea will inspire those transports, which PLATO imagined the vision of Virtue would inspire, if Virtue could be seen. What in truth can be so lovely, what so venerable, as to contemplate a king on whom the eyes of a whole people are fixed, filled with admiration, and glowing with affection? A king, in the temper of whose government, like that of NERVA, things so seldom allied as empire and liberty are intimately mixed, co-exist together inseparably, and constitute one real essence? What spectacle can be presented to the view of the mind so rare, so nearly divine, as a king possessed of absolute power, neither usurped by fraud, nor maintained by force, but the genuine effect of esteem, of confidence, and affection; the free gift of liberty, who finds her greatest security in this power, and would desire no other if the prince on the throne could be, what his people wish him to be, immortal? Of such a prince, and of such a prince alone, it may be said with strict propriety and truth,

“ Volentes

“ Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo.”

Civil fury will have no place in this draught : or, if the monster is seen, he must be seen as Virgil describes him,

“ Centum vinctus ahenis

“ Post tergum nodis, fremit horridus ore cruento.”

He

He must be seen subdued, bound, chained, and deprived entirely of power to do hurt. In his place, concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land; joy sitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed; busy to improve their private property and the public stock; fleets covering the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of industry, carrying assistance or terror abroad by the direction of wisdom, and asserting triumphantly the right and the honor of Great Britain, as far as waters roll and as winds can waft them.

THOSE who live to see such happy days, and to act in so glorious a scene, will perhaps call to mind, with some tenderness of sentiment, when he is no more, a man, who contributed his mite to carry on so good a work, and who desired life for nothing so much, as to see a king of Great Britain the most popular man in his country, and a PATRIOT KING at the head of an united people.

A PATRIOT KING

He must be free in deed, bound, chained, and deprived an-
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most popular man in his country, and a Patriot King at
the head of an united people.

STATE OF PARTIES

OF THE

STATE of PARTIES

At the ACCESSION of

King GEORGE the First.

STATE OF PARTIES

At the Accession of

King GEORGE the First.

OF THE
STATE of PARTIES

AT THE

Accession of King GEORGE the First.

I PERCEIVE by yours that my discourse of the character and conduct of a PATRIOT KING, in that article which relates to party, has not entirely satisfied your expectations. You expected, from some things that I remember to have said to you in conversation, and others that have fallen on that occasion from my pen, a more particular application of those general reasonings to the present time, and to the state of parties, from the late king's accession to the throne. The subject is delicate enough, and yet I shall speak upon it what truth exacts from me, with the utmost frankness: for I know all our parties too well, to esteem any; and I am too old, and too resigned to my fate, to want, or to fear any.

WHATEVER anecdotes you have been told, for you are too young to have seen the passages of the times I am going to mention, and whatever prepossessions you have had, take these

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facts for undoubted truths: That there was no design on foot, during the four last years of queen ANNE's reign, to set aside the succession of the house of Hanover, and to place the crown on the head of the pretender to it; nor any party formed for this purpose at the time of the death of that princess, whose memory I honor, and therefore feel a just indignation at the irreverence with which we have seen it treated. If such a design had been on foot, during that time, there were moments when the execution of it would not have been difficult, or dangerous enough, to have stopped men of the most moderate resolution. Neither could a design of that nature have been carried on so long, though it was not carried into execution, without leaving some traces, which would have appeared when such strict inquiries were made; when the papers of so many of the queen's servants were seized, and even her own papers, even those she had sealed up to be burnt after her death, were exposed to so much indecent inspection. But, laying aside all arguments of the probable kind, I deny the fact absolutely: and I have the better title to expect credit, because it could not be true without my knowledge, or at least suspicion of it; and because even they who believed it, for all who asserted it did not believe it, had no proof to produce, nor have to this hour, but vain surmises; nor any authority to rest upon, but the clamor of party.

THAT there were particular men, who corresponded indirectly, and directly too, with the pretender, and with others for his service; that these men professed themselves to be zealous in it, and made large promises, and raised some faint hopes, I cannot doubt: tho' this was unknown to me at that time, or at least I knew it not with the same certainty, and in the same detail, that I have known it since. But if this

was done by some who were in the queen's service, it was done too by some who were out of it, and, I think, with little sincerity by either.

It may well seem strange to one who carries in his breast a heart like yours, that men of any rank, and especially of the highest, should hold a conduct so false, so dangerous, always of uncertain event, and often, as it was in the case here mentioned, upon remote contingencies, and such as they themselves think the least probable. Even I think it strange, who have been much longer mingled in a corrupt world, and who have seen many more examples of the folly, of the cunning, and the perfidy of mankind. A great regard to wealth, and a total contempt of virtue, are sentiments very nearly allied: and they must possess the whole souls of men whom they can determine to such infamous duplicity, to such double treachery. In fact they do so. One is so afraid of losing his fortune, that he lays in claims to secure it, perhaps to augment it, on all sides, and to prevent even imaginary dangers. Another values so little the inward testimony of a good conscience, or the future reproaches of those he has deceived, that he scruples not to take engagements, for a time to come, that he has no design to keep; if they may serve as expedients to facilitate, in any small degree, the success of an immediate project. All this was done at the time, on the occasion, and by the persons I intend. But the scheme of defeating the protestant succession was so far from being laid by the queen and her ministers, and such a resolution was so far from being taken, that the very men I speak of, when they were pressed by the other side, that is from Versailles and St. Germain, to be more particular, and to come into a closer concert, declined both, and gave the most evasive answers.

A LITTLE before, or about, the time of the queen's death, some other persons who figured afterwards in the rebellion, entered in good earnest into those engagements, as I believe; for I do not know exactly the date of them. But whenever they took them, they took them as single men. They could answer for no party to back them. They might flatter themselves with hopes and dreams like POMPEY, if little men and little things may be compared with great, of legions ready to rise at the stamp of their feet. But they had no assurance, no nor grounds to expect any troops, except those of the highlands; whose disposition in general was known to every man, but whose insurrection, without the concurrence of other insurrections and other troops, was deemed, even by those that made them take arms afterwards, not a strength but a weakness; ruin to the poor people, and ruin to the cause. In a word, these men were so truly single in their engagements, and their measures were so unripe for action when the resolution of acting immediately was taken by them, that, I am persuaded, they durst not communicate their design to any one man of consequence that served at that time with them. What persuades me of it is this. One man, whom they thought likely to incline to them on several accounts, they attempted indirectly and at a great distance: they came no nearer to the point with him, neither then, that is just before the queen's death, nor afterwards. They had indeed no encouragement to do it; for, upon this hint, and another circumstance which fell in, both he and others took several occasions to declare, that tho' they would serve the queen faithfully, and exclusively of all other regards or engagements, to her last breath, yet after her decease they would acknowledge the prince on whom the succession devolved by law, and to which they had sworn, and no other. This declaration would have been that

of

of the far greatest number of the same party, and would have been stuck to by them, if the passions and private interests of another party had not prevailed over the true interest of a new family that was going to mount the throne. You may ask me now, and the question will not be at all improper, How it came to pass, if the queen and her ministers had no design to defeat the succession, that so much suspicion of it prevailed, that so great an alarm was taken and so great a clamor raised? I might answer you very shortly and very truly, By the strange conduct of a first minister, by the contests about the negotiations of the peace, and by the arts of a party.

THE minds of some ministers are like the "sanctum sanctorum" of a temple I have read of somewhere: before it a great curtain was solemnly drawn; within it nothing was to be seen but a confused groupe of mis-shapen, and imperfect forms, heads without bodies, bodies without heads, and the like. To develop the most complicated cases, and to decide in the most doubtful, has been the talent of great ministers: it is that of others to perplex the most simple, and to be puzzled by the plainest. No man was more desirous of power than the minister here intended, and he had a competent share of cunning to wriggle himself into it; but then his part was over, and no man was more at a loss how to employ it. The ends, he proposed to himself, he saw for the most part darkly and indistinctly; and if he saw them a little better, he still made use of means disproportionate to them. That private correspondence with the queen, which produced the change of the ministry in 1710, was begun with him whilst he was secretary of state, and was continued, thro' him, during the two years that intervened between his leaving the court, and his return to it. This gave him the sole confidence of the queen, put him more absolutely at the head

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of the party that came into power, and invested him with all the authority that a first minister could have in those days, and before any man could presume to rival, in that rank, and in this kingdom, the rank of the ancient mayors of the palace in France. The tories, with whom and by whom he had risen, expected much from him. Their expectations were ill answered: and I think that such management as he employed would not have hindered them long from breaking from him, if new things had not fallen in, to engage their whole attention, and to divert their passions.

THE foolish prosecution of SACHEVEREL had carried party-rage to the height, and the late change of the ministry had confirmed it there. These circumstances, and many others relative to them, which I omit, would have made it impossible, if there had been honesty and wisdom enough to desire it, to bring about a coalition of the bulk of the tories and whigs at the latter end of this reign: as it had been brought about a few years before under the administration of my lord MARLBOROUGH and my lord GODOLPHIN, who broke it soon, and before it had time to cement, by making such an use of it as I am unable to account for, even at this hour. The two parties were in truth become factions in the strict sense of the word. I was of one, and I own the guilt; which no man of the other would have a good grace to deny. In this respect they were alike; but here was the difference: one was well united, well conducted, and determined to their future, as well as their present objects. Not one of these advantages attended the other. The minister had evidently no bottom to rest his administration upon, but that of the party at the head of which he came into power: if he had rested it there, if he had gained their confidence, instead of creating, even wantonly, if I may say so, a distrust of himself

himself in them, it is certain he might have determined them to every national interest during the queen's time, and after her death. But this was above his conception as well as his talents. He meant to keep power as long as he could, by the little arts by which he had got into it: he thought that he should be able to compound for himself in all events, and cared little what became of his party, his mistress, or the nation. That this was the whole of his scheme appeared sufficiently in the course of his administration; was then seen by some; and has been since acknowledged by all people. For this purpose he coaxed and persecuted whigs; he flattered and disappointed tories; and supported, by a thousand little tricks, his tottering administration. To the tory party he held out the peace, as an æra when all they expected should be done for them, and when they should be placed in such fulness of power and such strength of party, "that it would be more the interest of the successor to be well with them, than theirs to be well with him." Such expressions were often used, and others of like import: and, I believe, these oracular speeches were interpreted, as oracles used to be, according as every man's inclinations led him.

THE contests that soon followed, by the violent opposition to the negotiations of peace, did the good hinted at above to the minister, and enabled him to amuse and banter his party a little longer. But they did great, and, in some respects, irreparable, mischief to Great Britain, and to all Europe. One part of the mischief they did at home is proper to be mentioned here. They dipped the house of Hanover in our party-quarrels, unseasonably, I presume to think, and impopularly; for tho' the contest was maintained by two parties that pretended equally to have the national interest at heart, yet the national interest was so plainly on one side of the question,
and

and the other side was so plainly partial, at the expence of this interest, to the emperor, the princes of the empire, and our other allies, that a successor to the crown, who was himself a prince of Germany, should have preserved, in good policy, for this very reason, the appearance at least of some neutrality. The means employed openly to break the queen's measures were indecent and unjustifiable: those employed, secretly, and meditated to be employed, were worse. The ministers of Hanover, whose conduct I may censure the more freely because the late king did not approve it all, took so remarkable a share in the first, that they might be, and they were, suspected of having some in the others. This had a very bad effect, which was improved by men in the two extremes. The whigs desired nothing more than to have it thought that the successor was theirs, if I may repeat an insolent expression which was used at that time: the notion did them honor, and, tho' it could give no color, it gave some strength, to their opposition. The Jacobites insinuated industriously the same thing; and represented that the establishment of the house of Hanover would be the establishment of the whig party, and that the interests of Great Britain would be constantly sacrificed to foreign interests, and her wealth drained to support them under that family. I leave you to judge what ingression such exaggerations must find, on such occasion, and in such a ferment. I do not think they determined men to Jacobitism. I know they did not; but I know that they disinclined men from the succession, and made many, who resolved to submit to it, submit to it rather as a necessary evil, than as an eligible good.

THIS was, to the best of my observation, and knowledge, the state of one party. An absurd one it was, and the consequences of it were foreseen, foretold, and pressed upon the minister

minister at the time, but always without effect, and sometimes without any answers. He had some private intrigue for himself at Hanover: so he had at Bar. He was the bubble of one in the end: the pretender was so of the other. But his whole management in the mean time was contrived to keep up a kind of general indetermination in the party about the succession; which made a man of great temper once say to him with passion, that "he believed no other minister, " at the head of a powerful party, would not be better at " Hanover, if he did not mean to be worse there."

THE state of the other party was this. The whigs had appeared zealous for the protestant succession from the time when king WILLIAM proposed it, after the death of the duke of GLOUCESTER. The tories voted for it then; and the acts that were judged necessary to secure it, some of them at least, were promoted by them. Yet were they not thought, nor did they affect, as the others did, to be thought, extremely fond of it. King WILLIAM did not come into this measure, till he found, upon trial, that there was no other safe and practicable: and the tories had an air of coming into it for no other reason. Besides which, it is certain that there was at that time a much greater leaven of Jacobitism in the tory-lump, than at the time spoken of here.

Now, thus far the whigs acted like a national party, who thought that their religion and liberty could be secured by no other expedient, and therefore adhered to this settlement of the crown with distinguished zeal. But this national party degenerated soon into faction; that is, the national interest became soon a secondary and subservient motive, and the cause of the succession was supported more for the sake of the party or faction, than for the sake of the nation; and with views

that went more directly to the establishment of their own administration, than to a solid settlement of the present royal family. This appeared, evidently enough, to those whom noise and shew could not impose upon, in the latter end of the queen's reign, and plain beyond dispute to all mankind, after her decease. The art of the whigs was to blend, as undistinguishably as they could, all their party-interests with those of the succession: and they made just the same factious use of the supposed danger of it, as the tories had endeavored to make, some time before, of the supposed danger of the church. As no man is reputed a friend to christianity beyond the Alps and the Pyrenées, who does not acknowledge the papal supremacy, so here no man was to be reputed a friend to the protestant succession, who was not ready to acknowledge their supremacy. The interest of the present royal family was, to succeed without opposition and risque, and to come to the throne in a calm. It was the interest of a faction that they should come to it in a storm. Accordingly the whigs were very near putting in execution some of the wildest projects of insurrections and rebellion, under pretence of securing what there was not sufficient disposition, nor any preparation at all made to obstruct. Happily for the public these designs proved abortive. They were too well known to have succeeded; but they might have had, and they would have had, most fatal consequences. The storm, that was not raised to disturb and endanger the late king's accession, was only deferred. To a party, who meant nothing less than engrossing the whole power of the government and the whole wealth of the nation under the successor, a storm, in which every other man should be driven from him, was too necessary, not to be conjured up at any rate; and it was so immediately after the late king's accession. He came to the throne easily and quietly, and took possession of the kingdom with

as little trouble, as he could have expected if he had been not only the queen's successor, but her son. The whole nation submitted cheerfully to his government, and the queen's servants discharged the duty of their offices, whilst he continued them in their offices, in such a manner as to merit his approbation. This was signified to some of them, to the secretaries in particular, in the strongest terms, and according to his majesty's express order, before the whole council of state. He might I think, I thought then that he ought, and every man, except the earl of O---D, who believed, or had a mind to make others believe, that his influence would be great in the new reign, expected, that he would have given his principal confidence and the principal power of the administration to the whigs: but it was scarce possible to expect, that he would immediately let loose the whole fury of party, suffer the queen's servants, who had surely been guilty of no crime against him, nor the state, to be so bitterly persecuted; and proscribe in effect every man in the country who did not bear the name of whig. Princes have often forgot, on their accession to a throne, even personal injuries received in party quarrels: and the saying of LEWIS the twelfth of France, in answer to those who would have persuaded him to shew severity to LA TREMOUILLE, is very deservedly famous. "God forbid," said he, "that LEWIS the twelfth should revenge the quarrels of the duke of Orleans." Other princes, who have fought their way to the throne, have not only exercised clemency, but shewn favor to those who had stood in arms against them; and here again I might quote the example of another king of France, that of HENRY the fourth. But to take an example in our own country, look back to the restoration, consider all that passed from the year 1641 to the year 1660, and then compare the measures that king CHARLES the second was advised to pursue, for the establishment of his

government, in the circumstances of that time, with those which the late king was advised, and prevailed on, against his opinion, inclination, and first resolution, to pursue, in the circumstances I have just mentioned. I leave the conclusion to the candor and good sense of every impartial reader.

To these measures of unexpected violence, alone, it must be ascribed, that the pretender had any party for him of strength sufficient to appear and act. These measures, alone, produced the troubles that followed, and dyed the royal ermines of a prince, no way sanguinary, in blood. I am far from excusing one party, for suffering another to drive them into rebellion. I wish I could forget it myself. But there are two observations on that event, which I cannot refuse myself to make. One is, that the very manner in which this rebellion was begun, shews abundantly that it was a start of passion, a sudden phrensy of men transported by their resentment, and nothing less than the execution of a design long premeditated and prepared. The other is, that few examples are to be found in history, perhaps none, of what happened on this occasion, when the same men, in the same country, and in the compass of the same year, were ready to rise in arms against one prince without any national cause; and then provoked, by the violence of their councils, the opposite faction to rise in actual rebellion against the successor.

THESE are some of the effects of maintaining divisions in a nation, and of governing by faction. I might descend into a detail of many fatal consequences that have followed, from the first false step which was taken, when the present settlement was so avowedly made, on the narrow bottom of party. But I consider that this discourse is growing into length;
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that I have had, and shall have occasion to mention some of these consequences elsewhere; and that your own reflections on what has been said will more than supply what I omit to say in this place. Let me therefore conclude by repeating, that division has caused all the mischief we lament, that union can alone retrieve it, and that a great advance towards this union was the coalition of parties, so happily begun, so successfully carried on, and of late so unaccountably neglected, to say no worse. But let me add, that this union can never be complete, till it become an union of the head with the members, as well as of the members with one another: and that such an union can never be expected till patriotism fills the throne, and faction be banished from the administration.

SOME

S O M E
R E F L E C T I O N S
O N
The Present STATE of the NATION,
Principally with Regard to
Her TAXES and her DEBTS,
A N D O N
The CAUSES and CONSEQUENCES of them.

“ Mihi autem non minori curæ est qualis respublica post mortem
“ meam futura sit, quam qualis hodiè sit.” CIC. in LÆL.

SOME

REFLECTIONS

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE NATION

Principally with Regard to

HER TAXES AND HER DEBTS

THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THEM

By JOHN G. FULTON, Esq. of New York

S O M E
R E F L E C T I O N S
O N T H E
P R E S E N T S T A T E of the N A T I O N,

Principally with Regard to

Her T A X E S and her D E B T S,

A N D O N

The C A U S E S and C O N S E Q U E N C E S of them.

SINCE we are got out of a war the least successful, and the most expensive, that this nation ever made; after having taken part threescore years together, like principal actors, in all the other wars and all the negotiations of the continent; it is time surely, that we recal our attention home-wards, and consider the present state of our own country, particularly with respect to her taxes and her debts, to the nature and application of the former, to the rise and progress of the latter, to the necessity and to the means of diminishing both.

THE revolution of our government in one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, makes a most remarkable æra in the history of Britain on many accounts, and on none more than on that which is the subject of these papers. The public revenue,

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in net money, amounted at that time to no more than two millions annually, which were sufficient to defray the ordinary expences of the crown, as well as to maintain a fleet, and a greater army than was necessary for the defence of the country at that time. This revenue was raised without any tax on land or malt, and by a very few of those innumerable duties which have been since laid, to the oppression of the landed and mercantile interest of the nation. These duties have been so mortgaged too, that we are unable, at this time, to send a cock-boat to sea, or to keep a single centinel at Whitehall-gate without a land-tax.

THE public debts, that of the bankers included, amounted to little more than 300,000 l. at the beginning of this æra. They amount now to fourscore millions. To discover how this great change in our national circumstances has been brought about is surely an object of reasonable, and may be such of useful, curiosity.

KING WILLIAM engaged in a necessary war with France as soon as he came to the throne. It was necessary that he should maintain the revolution he had made, and assert his right to the crown he had acquired by the best of all titles, the free gift of a people whom he had delivered from impending destruction, from popery and slavery. This war might be thought necessary too in another respect.

FROM the treaty of Westphalia, and from the Pyrenean, to the accession of king WILLIAM to our throne, the power and ambition of France had grown up together, and were become exorbitant. No efforts had been made sufficient to reduce, scarce any sufficient to resist, the former. No measures had been concerted, no preparations had been made, to disappoint the latter in that great object, the acquisition of the Spanish monarchy

monarchy to the house of Bourbon. From the revolution this alarm was taken, which should have been taken sooner. The spirit of our court was changed, the eyes of our people were opened, and all men saw how necessary it was to preserve, in concert with the Spaniards, the succession of their monarchy to the house of Austria, instead of suffering it to fall into that of Bourbon, which was excluded from it by the most solemn engagements.

QUEEN ANNE came to the throne at the eve of another great war, of a war against France and Spain, which her predecessor was ready to undertake, tho' he had not actually declared it when he died, in order to procure some reasonable satisfaction to the emperor, for a succession which had been then lost to his family by his own fault.

KING WILLIAM, who engaged for so much more in the first grand alliance, would engage for no more than this in the second. But the private interest of her ministers, the intrigues of her allies, and the rashness of a party, drew the queen much further : and it must be confessed that a subserviency to the court of Vienna, which has cost us so dear, began in her time, not in king WILLIAM's, tho' her heart was, what she declared it to be, entirely English, and tho' he was censured, I think very unjustly, for too great regard to foreign interests and too little for those of Britain.

THE war king WILLIAM waged was not very successful ; and yet if the emperor would have consented to send his second son into Spain during the life of CHARLES the second, king WILLIAM would have succeeded in both the objects of this war. He had maintained himself on the throne, and had obliged France to promise that she would not disturb him in the possession of it. As to the other object, no treaties of

partition would have been thought necessary by him in that case ; neither would this nation have had any thing more to do, when the Spanish succession was open, than to support, with the concurrence of that whole nation, an Austrian prince who was actually on the spot with an Austrian army, and who had been already declared presumptive heir. Thus we might have had a defensive war to make with great advantages on our side ; and the events of the offensive war, which we were obliged to make afterwards, shew sufficiently what would have been the success of the other. The councils of Vienna laid us wantonly, if I may say so, under great disadvantages : and king WILLIAM therefore resolved, like a wise prince, to expose neither this country nor his own to the hard task of recovering the whole Spanish monarchy out of the hands of PHILIP. He accommodated his system to the circumstances of the time ; and aimed at no more now than to force the French and Spaniards to come into some composition about the Austrian pretensions, about trade, about barriers, and about effectual means to hinder a future union of France and Spain under one monarch.

THIS was all that he meant. But they who delighted in war, because they hoped to get immensely by it, and they who amused themselves and others with vain speculations, about a thing very real in itself, about a ballance of power, ensnared both England and Holland into engagements for dethroning PHILIP and setting up CHARLES in his room, tho' we had acknowledged the former, tho' the Castilians were strongly attached to him, and tho' he was in quiet possession of the Spanish dominions in both hemispheres. Flattered by groundless hopes of a revolution in favor of his rival, and flushed by the first success of our arms, this precipitate engagement was approved and supported by us, notwithstanding the absurd conduct of the emperor and the wise reserve of king WILLIAM,

WILLIAM, both of which should have put us more on our guard, and have made us less sanguine.

It is perhaps worth while to make an observation in this place, which was made at the time we speak of by Spaniards who acknowledged PHILIP the fifth, in compliance with the will of CHARLES the second, and yet were averse to the influence and authority which France assumed over them. They observed that CROMWELL had forced them to give their infant to LEWIS the fourteenth, by joining his arms with those of France against them, and that we went about to force them, half a century afterwards, by a new war, to an absolute dependance on France.

THE COURT of Vienna, desirous to acquire the Italian dominions, and too indifferent about Spain and the West-Indies, made her profit of our rashness. She left the whole weight of the war on England and Holland. She did worse. She not only neglected the war by contributing little or nothing to it, except the name of Austria and the claims of that family; she sacrificed the success of the common cause, for so it was called improperly enough by her, whenever any little inferior interest that seemed to be hers more immediately came in the way; by which she not only prolonged the war, but increased the annual expence of it to England and Holland, without taking any share in this expence on herself that deserves to be mentioned.

EXPERIENCE was lost upon us. Our political delirium continued. It grew in some sort habitual by the artifice employed at home, and by the victories obtained abroad. The war languished however upon the whole, notwithstanding our utmost efforts; the weight of Austria grew every year heavier
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on us, whilst that of Spain grew every year lighter on France; the Spaniards were able to defend themselves against us at last, and the success of our enemies in Spain made them amends for our victories in Flanders.

THE dethronement of PHILIP in favor of CHARLES, was become evidently a chimerical project in the year 1710, at the latest, and it became in the following year so ineligible by the death of the emperor JOSEPH, to whom his younger brother CHARLES succeeded, that one cannot conceive the men who clamored for it, even then to have been in earnest; since their aim, in that case, must have been to set the Imperial and Spanish crowns on the same head, against the common interest of Europe and the fundamental principle of the war.

BUT tho' we could not conquer Spain by a war, we might have reduced the exorbitant power of France by a peace. We might have stripped her of that barrier wherein this exorbitant power consisted chiefly, as every man, who knew what he meant when he talked of this exorbitant power, must have intended. We might have laid her as open to the incursions of her neighbors, as her neighbors were to hers: as open as she had been when a prince CASIMIR, or any other general of Reitres, could penetrate without a siege, and sometimes without a battle, into the heart of her provinces.

BUT we would not do the latter, because we could not do the former. We acted like men who thought that the exorbitant power of one family could not be reduced, unless a power as exorbitant was raised in another; and who never looked back to preceding centuries to consider the usurpations, the tyranny, and the bigotry that the house of Austria had exercised

cised in the fulness of her power, and would exercise again if she was ever restored to the same.

WE were disappointed in our great political views, after two wars that had lasted twenty-five years with a very short interval between them. We had done our utmost to defeat that scheme of ambition France had opened to herself, and of danger to all her neighbors, by the Pyrenean treaty: and, tho' this danger affected us less than any other nation engaged in the alliance, we had exhausted ourselves to maintain it.

WHEN king WILLIAM entered, immediately after the Revolution, on this great scene of action; the unincumbered condition of this nation, which has been hinted at above, was such, that he might have been supported in it by good management, as profusely as he was, and even more effectually, by the revenue then subsisting, by a land-tax, by the excise on malt, and by some additional subsidies, all of which would have been raised within the year. A scheme of this kind was prepared and offered. It was allowed to be practicable: but it was rejected for a reason that appeared plausible in political refinement, and has proved most pernicious in its consequences. It was said that a new government, established against the ancient principles and actual engagements of many, could not be so effectually secured any way, as it would be if the private fortunes of great numbers were made to depend on the preservation of it; and that this could not be done unless they were induced to lend their money to the public, and to accept securities under the present establishment. Thus the method of funding and the trade of stock-jobbing began. Thus were great companies created, the pretended servants, but in many respects the real masters of every administration.

I do not pretend to determine how far the wisdom of our legislature might have provided, at the beginning of the new war, against the growth and spreading of that cancerous humor, which had begun to gnaw our vitals in the former. All I am to observe is, that, a moneyed interest being firmly established by this time, and such numbers being accustomed to make immense profit at the public expence, there is no room to wonder if we proceeded on the same plan during the reign of queen ANNE. We did so : and the debts contracted in this war, being added to those of the former, the whole of our debt amounted to little less than fifty millions.

HAVING accumulated so immense a debt, the queen put an end to the war. She could not attempt to alter the system of it whilst it continued, without throwing the whole alliance into confusion, after some of the principal allies had declared, on the death of JOSEPH, that they would not consent CHARLES should be king of Spain as well as emperor.

THE interest of Britain required, no doubt, that we should turn our eyes from the continent to our own island, and that we should improve the opportunity and the advantages which a peace gave us. Whatever prejudices have been propagated industriously against that of Utrecht, thus much at least is certain. We were obliged no longer by treaties to assume any other part in the affairs of the continent, than that which the immediate interest of our country required. The opportunity and the means of diminishing taxes, reviving commerce, and paying debts, were open to us.

THIS pacific scheme ought to have been pursued, no doubt, till we had retrieved our affairs, and recovered our former strength

strength in some good degree, and till we were prepared to take any part in future events which our honor or interest might require. Nay, this scheme was the more necessary to be pursued; if France was left too powerful, no matter by whose fault, as I am ready to admit that she was; and if the two branches of Bourbon were to be looked upon in this century, like the two branches of Austria in the last, as inseparable allies, united by blood and by joint ambition. It was the more easy to be pursued too, because a long minority was beginning in France, and many other circumstances of characters and of situation extremely favorable to it concurred in that court and country.

THIS should have been the scheme of our policy: but unhappily it was not. The late king, as elector of Hanover, had reason, no doubt, to desire the acquisition of Bremen and Verden. Our nation contributed to it with her money, and forced it with her arms; tho' it was made in contradiction to the engagements that the crown of England had taken when king WILLIAM gave his guaranty to the treaty of Travendal. This acquisition became the first link of a political chain, by which we were dragged back into new and expensive broils, the consequences whereof we feel at this hour.

WHEN the king acquired these dutchies, it became necessary to procure the investiture of them: and I will say, because I can demonstrate, that these investitures might have been procured, and the emperor flattered with the acquisition of Sicily, by measures as effectual, and much more consistent with former treaties and the public tranquillity, than those that were taken. The house of Austria sacrificed the success of the war to the immediate acquisition of Naples. We sacrificed all the advantages of the peace, to procure her that of Sicily in the manner we did procure it. I have heard it

said, whilst these affairs were in transaction, that the treaty of quadruple alliance would complete that of Utrecht. But the event has shewn, and it was obvious to foresee, that one of these treaties would unravel the system of the other. If we had maintained the neutrality of Italy, as we were obliged to do by treaty, even indulging the emperor in the acquisition of Sicily, and yielding to the house of Savoy the eventual successions which we stipulated should be given to Spain, the intention of the treaty of Utrecht would have been preserved, and France by concurring in these measures would have shewn her sincerity in maintaining the settlement of Europe. But when she became a party to the quadruple alliance, she meant nothing more than to give the Spanish branch of Bourbon an opportunity of reannexing to that crown the Italian dominions: and we were grossly her bubbles when we triumphed that she entered into the quadruple alliance, and made a sham war to oblige PHILIP to accede to it.

As long, then, as there were hopes of obtaining an extraordinary investiture of Bremen and Verden, we flattered the emperor at no small expence. As soon as it became apparent that this investiture could be obtained in no other manner than it had been granted formerly, we insulted him. We imputed to him designs, he has constantly disowned, and we have never proved; after which we complained of his ingratitude, we threatened war, and we prepared for it by maintaining with great profusion a standing army of Hessians in Germany. The same men, who complained so lately that France had been left too powerful by the treaty of Utrecht, and that great danger would arise from her close connection with Spain, complained now of the too great power of the house of Austria, and of the danger that would arise from a good understanding between the emperor and king PHILIP. In short, our politics were not only variable, but incomprehensible to
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every man who knew the state and interest of Great Britain, but was not so well apprised of the several turns of interest which were to be served abroad.

WHEN our ministers had once departed from the strait line of British policy, the difficulty of returning to it became every year greater, and the inclination every year less. We continued busy and bustling in every court of Europe. We negotiated against the emperor in concert with France, and gave her thereby the means of regaining more of that credit and influence in the empire which she had formerly had, than she could have acquired without our assistance. We contrived to make peace abroad almost as chargeable to us as war. Abuses of every kind were suffered at home. Trade was neither eased nor encouraged, and the gradual payment of our debt was utterly neglected by a minister rather desirous to keep his country under this oppression, than ignorant of the means to deliver her from it. Whilst we acted in this manner, France grew frugal, she made the debts she could not pay sit more lightly on her, she raised her credit, and she extended her commerce. In short, her strength increased, and ours diminished. We were reduced to a state of weakness we had never felt before; and this very weakness was urged as a reason for bearing tamely the losses our merchants sustained, and all the affronts our government received, lest we should be drawn into a war by using reprisals, the common right of nations.

As tame as we were, the insolence of the Spaniards, the reasonable impatience of our merchants, and this very tameness of our government, made a sea-war unavoidable, just before the death of the emperor CHARLES the sixth; which event brought the principal powers of Europe into the field, set the whole continent in a flame, and formed one of those conjunctures wherein our honor and interest may oblige us to

take a part, and for which therefore we should always be prepared.

WE were in no degree so prepared, after six or seven and twenty years of peace; and yet when we took a part, we took the most lavish and the most impolitic that we could take. It was a miserable part by sea at first, and thro' the whole course of the war by land. I shall recal neither what we did, nor what we neglected to do; and I wish, for the honor of my country, that the whole may be buried in oblivion. Thus much only it is to my purpose to observe. First, That our councils seemed to be the echoes of those free-booters, TRENCK and MENTZEL, who talked of nothing less than conquering the two Alsacias and the three bishopricks, and of laying Champagne waste, whilst all our offensive projects on the Rhine were daily disappointed: and secondly, That we declined all overtures of peace, when the seat of the war was transferred, with great advantage to France, from Germany to the Netherlands, where we resolved to wage it whether the Dutch would or no, and where we were beat on every spot on which my lord MARLBOROUGH had conquered.

EVERY defeat in this war, like every triumph in the last, became a reason for continuing it: and this management, when no avowable reason could be given for it, gave suspicious and refining persons occasion to throw out a great deal of slander; for such I hope it was. In short, whatever the reasons were, we continued this inauspicious war so long, and we pushed it so far beyond our strength,; that we were within a few months of bankruptcy, when the French granted us, miraculously, the same terms that they would have granted two or three years before: and when they might have marched without much trouble or opposition, after
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taking Maestricht, into the heart of the Seven Provinces : for our last resource, a Muscovite army, was too far off to have enabled ours to make a stand.

By making the war in the Low Countries almost wholly at our own expence, and without any prospect of success, we meant to cause such a diversion to the forces of France as might leave Germany nothing to fear on the Rhine, and as might give time and opportunity to the empress queen to drive the French and Spaniards out of Lombardy. We sacrificed ourselves for these purposes: but in this war, as in the last, the court of Vienna sacrificed nothing. From the time the French had been obliged, more by the sickness of their troops and the ill conduct of their generals, than by the force of her arms, to abandon Germany, the empress queen seemed to make war just as it suited her conveniency, to save all the expence she could in the Netherlands, to plunder all she could in Italy, and to make us pay the whole immense subsidies which we gave her for both.

IN the Netherlands we were outnumbered vastly by the deficiencies of her quotas : and in Italy, where we had thrown the Genoese into the arms of France and Spain, with great and just indignation against us for the treaty we had made at Worms, and had, however, obliged them to submit after the battle of Placentia, we lost the whole advantage of it by the insatiable avarice and extreme brutality of the Austrians. Yet we continued our efforts on that side still ; and the sham siege of Genoa, for it was no more, and the harmless invasions of Provence and Dauphiny had no other meaning than to amuse and impose on us in the excess of our zeal.

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OUR expences in every part of this strange war, particularly in the Netherlands, were made without measure, because without controul; as they will be soon convinced who look into the artillery, forage, hospital, and other contingent accounts. The parliamentary aids from the year one thousand seven hundred and forty exclusively, to the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight inclusively, amount to 55,522,959l. 16s. 3d. and the new debt we have contracted to more than thirty millions, which are near twenty millions more of debt than France has contracted in the same time: a sum that will appear incredible to future generations, and is so almost to the present. There are three Reflections to be made on this state, which must add to our astonishment. First, That the greatest part of this vast expence has been granted on account of the war, chiefly since there remained no reason for continuing it; that is, since the time when it was in our power to have a peace at least as good as that we have now obtained; and I place this era no higher than the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven inclusively, tho' I might place it higher, perhaps, on very good grounds. Secondly, That the debt contracted in it exceeds by much that of king WILLIAM's, or that of queen ANNE's war; tho' both of them were much longer, and the last not only more widely spread, but carried into countries the distance of which and many other circumstances increased every article of our expence extraordinarily. Thirdly, That we have thrown, by our negotiations and by the late war, into the hands of the house of Bourbon much more dominion in Italy, than would have induced the French at Gertruydenberg to have recalled PHILIP, and to have given up Spain and the Indies; which they were ready to do at those conferences, as Buys and Vanderdussen acquainted the ministers of the allies, in making one of their reports to that assembly.

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BAD as our condition is, let us not despair. Not to despair of the commonwealth, whatever her condition be, is the principle of a true patriot, that is, of a faithful servant to his prince and country: and we may find an example to this purpose, which deserves to be quoted, in a book that is in the hands of most people, and that I hope is not unread at court, I mean the duke of SULLY's memoirs. In them we find that HENRY the fourth turned his whole application to every thing that might be useful or even convenient to his kingdom, without suffering things that happened out of it to pass unobserved by him, as soon as he had put an end to the civil wars of France, and had concluded a peace with Spain at Vervins. Is there a man, either prince or subject, who can read without the most elevated and the most tender sentiments the language he held to SULLY at this time, when he thought himself dying of a great illness he had at Monceaux? "My friend!" said he, "I have no fear of death. You, who have seen me expose my life so often, when I might so easily have kept out of danger, know this better than any man. But I must confess that I am unwilling to die, before I have raised this kingdom to the splendor I have proposed to myself; and before I have shewn my people that I love them like my children, by discharging them from a part of the taxes that have been laid on them, and by governing them with gentleness."

THE state of France was then even worse than the state of Great Britain is now, the debts as heavy, many of the provinces entirely exhausted, and none of them in a condition of bearing any new imposition. The standing revenues brought into the king's coffers no more than thirty millions, tho' an hundred and fifty millions were raised on the people: so great
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were the abuses of that government in raising of money, and they were not less in the dispensation of it. The whole scheme of the administration was a scheme of fraud, and all who served, cheated the public, from the highest offices down to the lowest, from the commissioners * of the treasury down to the under-farmers and the under-treasurers. SULLY beheld this state of things, when he came to have the sole superintendency of affairs, with horror. He was ready to despair: but he did not despair. Zeal for his master, zeal for his country, and this very state seemingly so desperate, animated his endeavors: and the noblest thought, that ever entered into the mind of a minister, entered into his. He resolved to make, and he made the reformation of abuses, the reduction of expences, and a frugal management, the sinking fund for the payment of national debts, and the sufficient fund for all the great things he intended to do, without overcharging the people.

HE succeeded in all. The people were immediately eased, trade revived, the king's coffers were filled, a maritime power was created, and every thing necessary was prepared to put the nation in a condition of executing great designs, whenever great conjunctures should offer themselves. Such was the effect of twelve years wise and honest administration: and this effect would have shewed itself in great enterprizes against the house of Austria, more formidable in those days than the house of Bourbon has been in ours; if HENRY the fourth had not been stabbed by one of those assassins into whose hands the interest of this house, and the frenzy of religion, had put the dagger more than once.

WHEN we consider, in these memorials, and in others which are come down to us, the deplorable condition to which

* Conseillers dans le conseil des finances.

which France was reduced at the end of the sixteenth century, we feel some of that horror which SULLY himself felt, and are ready to confess that the ruin of that kingdom, bankruptcy and confusion, must have followed ; if the opportunity, which this peaceful conjuncture gave, had not been improved immediately, and as wisely, and as vigorously as it was. Shall we not see our own deplorable condition, and the necessary consequences of it in the same light ? Shall we not be much more strongly affected by them ? Are we not as near to bankruptcy as the French nation was at that time, and much more so than they are at this time ? May not confusion follow it here as well as there ? And finally, may not the joint ambition of two branches of Bourbon in some future conjuncture produce effects as fatal, and much more so to us, if we continue in our present state of impotence till such a conjuncture happens, as were to be feared by France at the time we speak of from the joint ambition of two branches of Austria ? In short, we have much to apprehend, unless we have the courage and the virtue to probe our domestic wounds to the bottom, and to apply immediately not palliative, but the most specific remedies. If we do this ; instead of fearing others, we may become once more formidable ourselves. But this is certain, that they, who get first out of a distress common to us and to our neighbors, will give the law to the rest.

It may be said, that we have no SULLIES among us. I shall not take on me to determine whether we have or no. But I will venture to say, after SULLY himself, that altho' good princes may be wanting to good ministers ; yet good ministers will never be wanting to a prince who has discernment enough to find them, who chooses them for their superior parts, experience, and integrity ; and who resolves to support them,

as HENRY the fourth supported SULLY, against favorite mistresses, the cabals of the court, and the factions of the state.

It may be said again, that a king of France has power enough by the constitution of that government to support a minister who checks corruption, reforms abuses, and maintains a frugal management of the public revenue. But it may be asked, how a minister, who should undertake this, could be supported in a government like ours, where he would be sure to have for his enemies all those who have shared so long the public spoils, or who hope to share them, and where these enemies would have the means and opportunities of supplanting him, notwithstanding the protection of his master? I answer, by the parliament. How many ministers have there been, to whom much national mischief was imputed justly, and no one national good could be ascribed, and who were long supported by the favor of the crown, and by the concurrence of the two houses, which this favor and their own management procured them? Shall these supports be sufficient for a wicked or a weak minister; and shall innocence and ability, with the same favor and better management, be reckoned for nothing? I cannot think so ill, even of the present age, as degenerate as it is. It is degenerate no doubt: but I have heard men complain of this degeneracy, who promoted it first, and sought their excuse in it afterwards.

THE delegated power of a minister, under the legal prerogatives of the crown, is sufficient to carry on a system of reformation and frugality in the ordinary course of things, if the minister really intends it: and whenever extraordinary powers are wanting for extraordinary operations, as they must be in such a state as ours, they will be effectual, if granted; and if refused, they who refuse them, not the minister,

nister, will suffer by the refusal, and be answerable to the nation for it. The moneyed man may continue to enjoy a little more revenue by this refusal : but his fortune will be more precarious, and more liable to some future reverse. The merchant will continue to trade, the landed man to plow and sow, without even a prospect of being relieved from their servitude, not for the honest creditors alone, but for usurers and stock-jobbers, for those leeches who fill themselves continually with the blood of the nation, and never cease to suck it. The nation in the mean time will be reduced to the utmost poverty : and it behoves those particularly, who have brought us so near it, to shew that this was not their object, by concurring zealously with those who have used and will continue to use their best endeavors to prevent it.

THE difficulties we have to struggle with would not be so great as they are, notwithstanding the immense profusion to which the late war gave occasion and pretence ; if we did not feel in this instance, as we feel in others, the fatal consequences of a precedent administration. The payment of our debts might have been easily provided for in that time : nay, fourteen years, which are little more than two thirds of it, would have been sufficient to reduce them to twenty millions. If this had been done, the memory of the person who was at the head of that administration, and had the sole power of it, might have deserved honor.

LET us nourish in ourselves, and cultivate in others, sentiments more elevated than these, and more worthy of the British genius. The greater our national distress and danger are, the greater should the efforts be of every particular man to relieve his country from one, and thereby to guard it against the other. We are in a crisis that must turn either to

life or death, and that cannot turn to the former unless remedies are applied much more effectual than those of mountebanks, who find their account in palliating evils and in prolonging diseases. To palliate and to prolong would be, in our case, to kill, or to do something worse than kill, to break our constitution entirely, to render an accidental illness habitual and incurable.

ONE or two shillings in the pound, it is said, will be lessened this year upon land; and whatever is wanting for the current service, over and above the two shillings that remain, and the malt, will be borrowed on the credit of the sinking-fund at three per cent. The bait will be tempting; for so must every diminution of taxes be to those who have crouched so long under the weight of so many. But I may venture to say, that it will be no more than a bait; and that they who swallow it will have reason to repent of their rashness, when they find, as they will find very probably, that the natural effect of such measures must prevent the discharge of any considerable part of our debt, except in a term of years much longer than the prosperity and even the safety of our government admits.

I SAY the safety, as well as the prosperity: and some reflections very plain and obvious, tho' made by few, will justify me for saying so. As to the first, trade gave us wealth, wealth gave us power, and power raised our island to be, at one time, a match for France. If we desire to return into the same state, we must return by the same steps which raised us to it: and he, who should make a scheme for the payment of our debts, without a principal regard to the improvement of our trade, would make a very silly scheme. But it would be just
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as filly to make a scheme for both, in such a manner, as would render neither practicable.

THE necessity of diminishing taxes, in order to improve our trade, becomes a good reason, not for the strange purpose to which it is applied by some, but for hastening all the operations necessary to sink our debts, in order to hasten that diminution of taxes which will become practicable, when a part of our debt is sunk, and which will facilitate extremely the discharge of the rest. The truth is, that if we defer these operations too long, we may be never able to perform them with equal advantage, nor, by keeping pace with our neighbors, to renew our strength, as fast as they are intent to renew theirs. Our neighbors have suffered by former wars, and have been exhausted by the last as well, tho' I apprehend not so much, as we. France, for instance, has contracted in the late war no more than one third of the additional debt we have contracted in it, as I believe on very good authority : and she has been able to assign funds, which pay the interest of this debt regularly, and sink yearly a part of the principal. I am not so well apprised of the actual state of Spain. But the treasures of the West Indies are poured in to her daily ; and as she has been long recovered, or recovering, from her antient indolence and ignorance, she seems to apply herself to the augmentation of her maritime force, to the improvement of her trade, and even to that of domestic manufactures. In a word, what has been said before may be repeated here : they who get soonest out of the present common distress, will give the law to others, or be at least in a condition of not receiving it from any one.

As to national safety, we shall do well to observe how much the system of dominion and power in Europe is less
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favorable at present to our political interests and views, than it was when we undertook to mend it. Spain was falling, but not fallen into the hands of France, at the beginning of this century : and tho' the Spanish nation as well as court gave their monarchy afterwards to a prince of the house of Bourbon, that they might prevent the dismemberment of it ; yet they were averse enough, by long habits of hostility, to a French government. Fortune and we have done so well at last, that these two nations are now closely united by interest and by habit, and that Spain is therefore more than ever estranged from us ; the proofs of which are not only recent, but, I fear, actual.

THE frontier of France has been the great support of her exorbitant power, as wise men foresaw fourscore years ago, when LEWIS the fourteenth began to raise that wall of brass which reaches from the Alps to the Ocean, that it would become. This frontier is now more compact than ever by the acquisition of Lorain. The branches of the house of Bourbon have taken root in Italy as well as in Spain. France has learned by experience to raise and to maintain her credit, and to extend her commerce, for the protection and support whereof she seems more attentive than ever to increase her strength by sea : a strength she will always exert with great advantage over us in some respects, I mean in those of order, frugal management, and strict discipline.

THE whole empire, except Bavaria and Cologne, was attached to us by inclination as well as interest, in the war which began with this century. It is much otherwise now : and we may say, I fear, too truly, that the influence of France in Germany is little inferior to what it was whilst the league of the Rhine subsisted.

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THE DUTCH commonwealth, our best ally, and in some sort a barrier to Great Britain, is in a state of dissolution; and has not, either without, or within herself, those means of recovery by conjuncture and by character, that she has had on several occasions from the time her government was first formed.

THIS short state may serve to shew how difficult it will be, till we have paid a good part of our debt, and restored our country in some measure to her former wealth and power, to maintain the dignity of Great Britain, to make her respected abroad, and secure from injuries, or even affronts, on the part of her neighbors. This may appear easy, for aught I know, to some men. But sure I am, it would appear difficult to BURLEIGH and WALSINGHAM, if they were to rise from the dead; notwithstanding the success they had in queen ELIZABETH'S reign by doing much at little expence, and by employing management much more than force.

THESE reflections, and such as they suggest naturally to the mind, make it evident, that the future prosperity and safety of this country depend on the speedy diminution of our national debts. Nothing else can secure us effectually against contingent events that may be of fatal consequence to both. Recent experience has shewn how unfit we are become in every respect, except the courage of our common seamen and soldiers, to engage in war. We shall not therefore, I suppose, provoke it easily, or soon. But war may be brought upon us, tho' we should not provoke it, nor go to the continent to seek it. Nay, we may be reduced to the melancholy dilemma of increasing our annual expence to assert our rights, to protect our trade, and to maintain our dignity; or of fittingly
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tamely down and sacrificing them all. I think, nay I hope, that we should not do the last : and yet we should have much greater difficulties to struggle with in our present situation, than we had in the former, great as they were, if we attempted to do, what was then so shamefully neglected. We cannot increase our expences now, nor shall we be able to do so till some part of our national debt be discharged, without mortgaging on the remainder of the sinking fund, which would soon take away all hope of ever paying any part of this debt, and leave us nothing to mortgage but our land and our malt : whereas if a considerable part of this debt was discharged before any new war broke out, or we were reduced to any such dilemma as I have mentioned ; we should find ourselves, whilst it lasted, in a much better condition of defence or offence, and we might be able, as soon as it was over, to resume the same operations, and to proceed in our great domestic concern.

THESE considerations will have great weight with men, who are able to combine, all that is to be combined on such an important occasion, and, by reflecting on the past, and by observing the present, to judge of the future. The only effectual, and therefore necessary, remedies may appear violent, even to them : but they will consider, and every man ought to consider, that if we cannot bear our distemper, and will not bear our cure, the political body must perish. This miserable state will create justly the indignation of mankind. But this indignation should turn against those who have brought us into it, not against those who would deliver us from it. This is the language of reason dictated by public spirit : but private interest and narrow views will dictate another.

THE moneyed men will complain loudly that they are exposed to perpetual reductions of interest, which have served to no other purpose than to nourish the profusion of successive administrations: and, if this was to continue, their complaints would be just, and the hardships imposed upon them intolerable. It is, therefore, just that neither they should consent to this new reduction of interest, which may be called a new tax upon them, nor the landed men to the continuance of that old and heavy tax on land, unless they have the utmost security that the whole shall be applied to its proper use. There will be still complaints; and we shall hear the melancholy condition to which the widow and the orphan, whose small but sole fortunes are in the funds, will be reduced, most pathetically displayed. The answer will be, however, obvious. If the widow and the orphan, who have their estates in money, suffer by the reduction of interest; the widow and the orphan, who have their estates in land, will suffer by the continuance of the tax upon it: and both one and the other must take their share in the common calamity of their country.

BUT the truth is, that the feeble voice of the widow and the orphan will be little heard. The great din will be raised by stock-jobbers and usurers, by the principal men in our great companies, who, born to serve and to obey, have been bred to command even government itself. These men will roar aloud, and endeavor, by silent intrigue, as well as by noise, to obstruct every measure that tends to emancipate government out of their hands, to make the exchequer, what it ought to be, the great spring of public credit, and the great scene of all transactions relative to public receipts and payments.

LET these men learn therefore to submit, and to reason, as old BATEMAN did, when the reduction of interest was agreed to in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventeen. He told my lord STANHOPE, he was glad this resolution had been taken; because, tho' his interest diminished, he should think his principal more secure than ever. On the whole, complaints from this quarter will make little impresson on a minister, who knows that, tho' such men have been employed whilst new debts were to be contracted every year, and the public, like an extravagant spendthrift, was obliged to deal with usurers on their own terms; yet they are not to be consulted when debts are to be paid, and the public to be taken out of their hands; who knows, in short, that his arms are longer than theirs, and makes them feel that he will keep, or not keep, measures with them according to their behavior; who pursues steadily the wise and honest design of rendering his own and every future administration independent of them.

MUCH opposition will arise from two other quarters, the country and the court; in which I should apprehend that the least plausible might be the most successful.

THE landed man will think it hard, that he is not suffered to enjoy a little ease after having borne the burden and heat of the day, during a long course of expensive peace and of ruinous war. All that can be said, to persuade him, that an immediate diminution of the land-tax is contrary to his interest, will pass for deception and paradox. He will be apt to reason like his country tenants, who are always frightened at an immediate expence, tho' remote, and yet great profit must be the certain consequence of it. Let such a man look back then, and take his lesson from what is past. He will find that,
whilst

whilst he winked at profusion because he was flattered by abatements on the land-tax debts, debts were contracted that have cost him much more, than the continuance of that tax would have cost him. If we look back to the first ten years of his present majesty's reign, we shall find this very remarkably verified. Let the same man, after he has looked back, look forward again. He will see that, as any diminution of the land-tax to be supplied out of the produce of the sinking fund, or by borrowing even at three per cent. on the credit of it, must prevent, or retard, which may be equivalent to preventing, the discharge of any considerable part of our debt; so he will continue exposed to have the whole tax laid anew, on the first occasion either real or pretended. He may find himself, after a little respite, under the load of the same tax, and of an increased debt: and this may be all he will get by refusing to bear a little longer, for his own sake, and for an important object, what he has borne several years for the sake of others, and for the support of a most unsuccessful war; for such it may be reckoned, after the French were beat at Dettinghen.

ON the other side, if he is wise enough to desire, that the four shillings in the pound be continued for a few years; he will have his share in the common benefits of diminishing public debts, increasing public credit, improving trade, and restoring national prosperity. He may entertain the comfortable hope of a time when he, or his posterity, will have no need of consenting to any tax at all on land in time of peace; since the annual produce of other funds will be sooner or later, in this method, sufficient to defray the annual expence of the government. He may acquire an advantage that will make him ample amends for what it cost him. Such of the taxes, whether of excise or of customs, as bear hardest on the poor

laborers and on our own manufactures, may be reduced, gradually at least, without any considerable interruption of the operations necessary to discharge our national debt: and tho' he is little accustomed to think himself as much affected by other taxes, as he is by the land-tax, he will soon perceive, that a saving on every thing he eats, drinks, or wears, is a lasting and a large repayment of what this tax took from him whilst he consented to continue it. He will find himself a gainer, not only by what he saves in his expences, but by the improvement of his estate; for the whole system of national wealth and prosperity are intimately connected.

THE courtier will complain loudly, authoritatively, and pompously, that any retrenchments on our annual expences may do more hurt, than the saving can do good. But I believe it not hard to shew, that three shillings, or three shillings and sixpence in the pound on land, leaving the rest of the four shillings to go to the sinking fund, would be more than sufficient to answer all necessary expences in time of peace. Wise men are able to do a great deal with a little: every knave or fool is ready to do a little with a great deal. The former know that good policy consists in observing two sorts of œconomy, the greater and the less: to proportion, by the first, our expences to our circumstances and to those of our neighbors, and to do it with the utmost frugality that these circumstances combined together will admit: to controul, by the second, in the most strict and regular manner, the dispensation of the public treasure from the highest down to the lowest offices of the state. It is of the utmost importance, at this time especially, that both these kinds of œconomy be practised. Our well-being: even our security, depends upon them. If we do not pay our debts, we must sink under the load of them: and if we go about to pay them, without practising these two sorts of œconomy; the

the ridiculous figure, which I have seen in a Dutch print, of a man toiling and sweating to cord a rope of hay, whilst an ass bites it off at the other end as fast as he cords it, will be our proper emblem.

— EXTREME frugality was one of the means employed by the great minister who has been quoted above : and the success he had, in similar circumstances, should encourage the practice of the same frugality in ours. But he employed another expedient likewise, which is not less necessary here than it was there, nor in our time than it was in his. The expedient I mean, is that of reforming abuses. SULLY rendered this reformation no inconsiderable fund for the payment of public debts. Whether we can do so, as effectually as he did, or no, I determine not. But thus much is certain. Such a reformation will make all future services be carried on at a cheaper rate for the public ; and saving is often the surest way of gaining. Materials might be collected, not for a pamphlet, but for a regular treatise under distinct heads, concerning the abuses and corruptions which prevail among us in every part of the public service, and concerning the consequences of them : I know not too whether some work of this kind should not be undertaken, as invidious as it may seem, if nothing is done to reform these abuses, and to extinguish this corruption.

THEY were creeping forward long ago ; but since a certain period, they have advanced with very large strides. Frauds were connived at, perhaps encouraged, and corruption was propagated formerly by principal men who had, for the most part, more ambition than avarice, and who raised, by these means, a formidable party that might support them in power. But in process of time, and in favorable conjunctures, the contagion rose higher, and spread still wider ; principal
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men became parties to the greatest frauds; and the highest of those who governed, and the lowest of those who were governed, contributed, in their degrees, to the universal rapine. The greatest particular cheat, whereof any example can be found, was, I believe, that which arrears of subsidies to foreign princes, and arrears of pay to foreign troops, gave the opportunity and the means of executing.

I AM sensible, that the representation I have made of the degeneracy of our age and people, may give occasion to say, that the very things I have been pleading for are impracticable. It will be asked what expectation can be entertained of raising a disinterested public spirit among men who have no other principle than that of private interest, who are individuals rather than fellow-citizens, who prey on one another, and are, in a state of civil society, much like to HOBBS's men in his supposed state of nature? I must agree, tho' unwillingly, that the enterprize is difficult. But the more difficult it is, if nothing less can relieve us from the load of debt we lie under, nor prevent the consequences of lying under it much longer; every attempt to raise this spirit and to promote these measures, even the weakest, even mine, is commendable. The landed men are the true owners of our political vessel: the moneyed men, as such, are no more than passengers in it. To the first, therefore, all exhortations to assume this spirit should be addressed. It is their part to set the example: and when they do so, they have a right to expect that the passengers should contribute their proportion to save the vessel. If they should prove refractory; they must be told, that there is a law in behalf of the public, more sacred and more antient too, for it is as antient as political society, than all those under the terms of which they would exempt

exempt themselves from any reduction of interest, and consequently from any reimbursement of their principal; tho' this reduction and this reimbursement be absolutely necessary to restore the prosperity of the nation, and to provide for her security in the mean time. The law I mean, is that which nature and reason dictate, and which declares the preservation of the commonwealth to be superior to all other laws.

IF such a co-operation of the landed and moneyed interests is once brought about, the way will lie smooth before us, and a prospect of national prosperity at the end of it will open before us yearly. Even the prospect will be of great advantage both at home and abroad. We shall feel it in the rise of our credit, in the confidence which our friends, and in the respect which our enemies, will have for us; a respect that will be due justly to a people who exert so much vigor in the midst of so much distress, and take effectual measures to restore their national strength, and to resume their former dignity, instead of languishing on, under impotence and contempt.

THE man, who is not fired by such considerations as these, must have no elevation of mind, no love for his country, no regard for posterity, nor the least tincture of that public morality which distinguishes a good from a bad citizen. I know that futility, ignorance, and every kind of profligacy are general: but I know too that they are not universal, and therefore I do not despair. In all events, the merit of preserving our country from beggary, is little inferior to that of preserving it from slavery. They who engage therefore in so good a cause, and pursue it steadily in that public spirit, a revival of which can alone save this nation from misery, from oppression, and perhaps from confusion, the usual consequence of the other two; they will deserve better, I presume to say, the title of
 “ultimi

“ultimi Britannorum,” even if they should be defeated by the worst subjects of Britain, than that usurer BRUTUS, and that severe exactor of contributions, CASSIUS, deserved the title of “ultimi Romanorum,” when they were defeated in another manner by the worst citizens of Rome.

AFTER all that has been said in these papers, and all that might be said, concerning the conduct of the house of Austria, from the reign of king WILLIAM to the present time; it may be proper to add something by way of precaution, and to prevent very false conclusions, that many will be ready to draw from very true premises.

It is notoriously true, that a spirit of bigotry, of tyranny, and of avarice in the court of Vienna, maintained long the troubles in Hungary, which might have been appeased much sooner than they were. Thus a great and constant diversion was kept up in favor of France, even at the time when the two houses of Austria and Bourbon were struggling for that great prize, the Spanish succession, till the French troops took possession of Passau, and the malecontents of Hungary raised contributions in the very suburbs of Vienna.

It is notoriously true, that we might have had nothing more than a defensive war, as I have said in the foregoing papers, to make against France, with an Austrian prince on the throne of Spain, at the death of CHARLES the second; if the emperor LEOPOLD would have concurred in the wise and practicable measures which king WILLIAM proposed.

It is notoriously true, that we might have avoided the defeat at Almanza, and have supported much better the war in Spain; if a predilection for acquisitions in Italy had not deter-

determined the councils of Vienna to precipitate the evacuation of Mantua, wherein an army of French was blocked up after the battle of Turin, and which was let loose in this manner, against the opinion of the queen and the states general, time enough to beat us at Almanza.

FINALLY, for I will descend no more to particulars, it is notoriously true, that we might have taken Toulon, and have carried the war into the best provinces of France, for which queen ANNE had made, at a vast expence, all the necessary preparations; if the Austrians had not detached, in that very point of time, twelve thousand men on the expedition to Naples, and if prince EUGENE had not shewn too visibly, before persons still alive, that the taking of Toulon was the least of his objects.

THESE facts are sufficient to shew, how much the mistaken policy of the court of Vienna has over-loaded her allies during more than half a century, and has defeated the great design which these allies, and Britain in particular, carried on for her at the expence of infinite blood and treasure. Now there are many, in this kingdom, very ready to conclude from these facts, and from others of the same kind posterior to these, that our experience should teach us to neglect the interests of the house of Austria, and to be regardless of all that passes on the continent for the time to come. But surely such conclusions are very false. The principle of our conduct has been right, and our manner of pursuing it alone wrong. It was our neglect of the general interest of Europe, from the Pyrenean treaty to the revolution of our government in one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, that gave to France a long opportunity, and the means of raising an exorbitant power. It has been zeal without knowledge, and a

strange subserviency to private interests, which have almost exhausted this country, and defeated all our endeavors for the public good since that time. This we may alter. The principle of policy we cannot, as long as the division of power and property in Europe continues the same. We are an island indeed: but if a superior power gives the law to the continent. I apprehend that it will give it to us too in some great degree. Our forefathers apprehended, with reason, the exorbitant power of the house of Austria; and thought that the pretensions of MARY queen of Scots might give, even when she was a prisoner, opportunity and advantage, as they did no doubt, to this power to disturb our peace, and even to invade our island. The exorbitant power of the two branches of the house of Bourbon give surely in this respect, as well as in others, at least the same cause of apprehension now. It is, therefore, plainly our interest to maintain the rivalry between the families of Austria and of Bourbon; and for that purpose to assist the former on every occasion against the latter, as far as the common cause of Europe, not her private ambition, requires; and as far as our national circumstances may enable us to measure out our assistance in any conjuncture to her.

THESE are the measures and proportions, according to which alone political societies ought to unite in alliances, and to assist one another. There is a political, as well as a natural self-love; and the former ought to be, to every member of a commonwealth, the same determining principle of action, where public interest is concerned, that the latter will be to him most certainly wherever his private interest is concerned. I have heard it often said of one man, that he was a friend or an enemy to the house of Austria; and of another, that he was a friend or an enemy to the house of Bourbon. But these expressions proceed

ceed generally from passion and prepossession, as the sentiments they impute must proceed, whenever they are real, from these causes, or from one which is still worse, from corruption. A wise prince, and a wise people, bear no regard to other states, except that which arises from the coincidence or repugnancy of their several interests; and this regard must therefore vary, as these interests will do, in the perpetual fluctuation of human affairs. Thus queen ELIZABETH and her people opposed the house of Austria, and supported the house of Bourbon, in the sixteenth century. Thus queen ANNE and her people opposed the house of Bourbon, and supported the house of Austria, in the eighteenth. The first, indeed, was done with wiser council; the last with greater force of arms. By the first, our country was enriched; by the last, it was impoverished-----

N. B. These considerations were written thus far in the year seventeen hundred and forty-nine, but were never finished.

THE
S U B S T A N C E
OF SOME
L E T T E R S,

Written originally in FRENCH, about the Year 1720,

TO

Mr. de P O U I L L Y.

THE
OFFICE OF THE
SHERIFF
COUNTY OF
SHERBORN
MASSACHUSETTS
JANUARY 1880

TO THE
HONORABLE
JUDGE OF THE
SUPERIOR COURT
AT BOSTON
MASSACHUSETTS

IN RE
THE ESTATE OF
JAMES M. BROWN
DECEASED

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF SOME
LETTERS,

Written originally in FRENCH, about the Year 1720,

TO

Mr. de POUILLY.

SINCE you are so curious to know what passed in a conversation lately between one of your acquaintance and myself, wherein you have been told that I maintained a very singular paradox; I will give you some account of it, a general and short account, at least, of the first part, and one more particular and more full of the last, which is called paradoxical. You led me first, in my retreat, to abstract philosophical reasonings: and, tho' it be late to begin them at forty years of age, when the mind has not been accustomed to them earlier, yet I have learned enough under so good a guide, not to be afraid of engaging in them, whenever the cause of God and of natural religion is concerned.

THEY were both concerned, very deeply, on the occasion you refer to. There had been much discourse, in the company

pany that was present, concerning the absurd opinions, which many theistical philosophers entertained of old about the supreme Being. Many had been cited, and many reflections had been made on them, by several, when the dispute became particular between * Damon and me, he denying, and I affirming that there are sufficient proofs of the existence of one supreme Being, the first intelligent cause of all things. You may be sure, I made use of those you furnished me with by a geometrical application of the doctrine of final causes, which shews, in various instances, what numberless chances there are against one, that intelligence and design were employed in the production of each of these phenomena.

WHEN I could not silence my adversary by these proofs, tho' they carry probability up to a reasonable, if not to an absolute, certainty, I insisted on a proof which must give this certainty, I think, to every one who acknowledges that we are capable of demonstrative knowledge. I argued, "*à posteriori*," from the intuitive knowledge of ourselves, and the sensitive knowledge of objects exterior to ourselves, which we have, up to that demonstrative knowledge of God's existence, which we are able to acquire by a due use of our reason. Here we stuck a little, and he was ready to deny all sensitive knowledge, on the chimerical notions of father MALEBRANCHE, and some other philosophers, without considering that he deprived himself, in denying the existence of God, of those expedients, by which the others pretended to account for the perception of the ideas of objects exterior to the mind, independently of any sensitive knowledge. I endeavored to shew him, that to renounce sensitive knowledge, was to renounce, in some sort, humanity, and to place ourselves in some unknown rank, either above it, or below it. I

* I choose to call him by this feigned name here.

endeavored to state the true notion, by stating the true bounds, of sensitive knowledge, which is not sufficient indeed to shew us the inward constitutions of substances, and their real essences ; but which is sufficient to prove to us their existence, and to distinguish them by their effects. I concluded this article by quoting to him a passage in the logic of PORT-ROYAL, wherein it is said, that no man ever doubted, in good earnest, whether there is an earth, a sun, and a moon, no more than he doubted, whether the whole is bigger than a part ; that we may say, with our mouths, that we doubt of all these things, because we may lie ; but that we cannot oblige our minds to say so : from whence it is concluded, more generally than I shall conclude, that Pyrrhonians are not a sect persuaded of what they say, but a sect of liars. He did not insist much longer, but left me to pursue my argument from intuitive and sensitive knowledge, to a demonstration of God's existence, which great and fundamental truth results necessarily from a concurrence of all the kinds of human knowledge employed in the proof of it.

I was not interrupted by him in the course of this argument, nor did he attempt to break any links of this chain of demonstration, but followed the example of all those who refuse to yield to it. They are so far from considering the degrees, the bounds, and within these, the sufficiency, of human knowledge, that they ask continually, and that others endeavor, very often, vainly to give them, knowledge concerning the divine nature and attributes particularly, which it is impossible and unnecessary we should have, even on the supposition that there is a God. Unable to break thro' this demonstration, they hope to weaken the effect of it, on themselves and others, by founding high the difficulties that present themselves whenever we reason on the manner of God's existence, on

his attributes, on his providence, and on many points relative to these. That is, they will not receive a demonstration, made according to the clearest and most distinct ideas that we have, and by the most precise connection of them, because there are other things which we cannot demonstrate, nor explain, for want of other ideas. This proceeding is so unreasonable, that the atheist himself does not hold it on any other occasion; but admits the truth of many propositions, tho' he be unable to resolve several difficulties that are, some way or other, relative to them. He reasons on this important article of human knowledge, as he would be ashamed to reason on any other.

I might have rested the argument here, because, tho' there are secrets of the divine nature and œconomy which human reason cannot penetrate, yet several of the objections to them, which atheists commonly make, even that of physical and moral evil, and the supposed unjust distribution of good and evil, which has been made in all ages, and which is now more prevalent than ever, by the joint endeavors of atheists and christian divines, are easy to be refuted. These subjects have been so often treated between you and me, that I shall say nothing of them here, tho' I did not decline them there. On the contrary, if I do not flatter myself, I said enough to defeat the attack of the atheist, and to disappoint the treachery of the divine. After which I insisted with great reason surely on my side, that these difficulties, and more of the same sort, were so little able to embarrass the theist, that, instead of being repugnant to his system, a necessary consequence of it is, that such difficulties should arise. He is so little surprised to find them, that he would be surprised not to find them. In demonstrating, to him, the existence of God, his reason has not demonstrated to him a being little raised above humanity,
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and about whom he may always assume on human ideas, such as the divinities of the heathen were. She has demonstrated to him the existence of an all-perfect self-existent being, the source of all existence, invisible and incomprehensible; the author, not only of all that is visible and comprehensible to his creatures, but of all that is, in the whole extent of nature, whether visible or comprehensible to them or not. From hence he concludes, and well he may, that there must be many phenomena physical and moral for which he can, and many for which he cannot, account. The system of God's attributes being, like the exercise of them, infinite, and our system of ideas and of mental operations being very narrow and imperfect, it follows necessarily, that some few parts of the former system are proportionable to the latter, and that a multitude of others are not so. A theist may suffer himself to be led into difficulties; but the atheist, take what system of atheism you please, must fall into absurdity, and be obliged to assert what implies contradiction.

I CONSIDERED the supreme Being, in all I said, as a first intelligent cause, and as the creator of the universe. From hence my antagonist took occasion to ridicule what theistical poets, philosophers, and legislators have advanced concerning the first principles or the beginning of things, and the operations of a divine wisdom and power, in the production of them, as if they had been cotemporary historians and spectators of what they related most affirmatively and circumstantially. I joined with him, for the most part, in giving them this ridicule, and expressed myself with a just indignation against them, for attempting to impose so many fictions on mankind, and for presuming to account for the proceedings of infinite wisdom and power, by the whimsies of their own imaginations. He did not spare MOSES, nor I PLATO. But

when he went so far as to deny, on the strength of a very weak sophism, that we are obliged to ascribe the creation or formation of the world to intelligence and wisdom, he turned, I think, the ridicule on himself, for he reasoned thus :

WHEN you investigate the proceedings of nature, you observe certain means, that seem, to you, proportioned to certain ends. You perceive too, that you cannot imitate nature any other way than by proportioning means to ends, and thus you frame that complex idea of wisdom, to which you ascribe the phenomena, and the imaginary final causes of them. But you are grossly mistaken when you assume, that nature acts by such means as seem to you proportioned to these ends. Here is a clock which marks the hours and minutes, and strikes regularly, at certain periods, a certain number of times. The inward construction of this clock is unknown to you. But you see one made, which, by the means of certain weights, produces all the same effects. Will you assert now, that the motions of the first clock are regulated by weights, because those of the second are so? You will be much deceived if you do, for the motions of the first clock are produced and regulated by a spring.

THIS argument would have some force in opposition to such naturalists as STRATO of Lampfacus, as DES CARTES, and as others who have made hypothetical worlds, and have pretended to account for all the phenomena by such laws of matter and motion as they have thought fit to establish. But in the present case it is a mere paralogism, and unworthy of the man who employed it, since it serves to explain and confirm that very reasoning which it is intended to oppose. The same motions are produced indeed by different means, but still these different means are proportioned alike to the same end, which
proves,

proves the very thing I would prove, the intelligence of a workman.

WHEN we had done speaking of philosophers who admit the beginning of the world, we proceeded to those who deny it; and DAMON seemed to think himself strongly intrenched in the system of it's eternity. As we cannot conceive, said he, that matter was created and brought out of nothing, so we cannot conceive, neither, that matter could of itself produce motion, nor that matter and motion together could produce thought. But there arises from hence no necessity of assuming, that there is any superior Being. Matter, motion, thought are eternal, and have been always what they are. The same nature, and the same course of things, that exist actually, have always existed.

To this it was easy to answer, that if I agreed with him in owning the eternity of the world, this concession would not infirm the proofs I had brought of an eternal Being, distinct from the world, as the workman is from his work. We may allow the world to be eternal, without allowing that it is the sole eternal Being. All that exists, has a cause of it's existence, either out of itself, or in itself. It has no cause of it's existence out of itself, if it is the sole eternal Being. It has this cause then within itself, and exists by the necessity of it's own nature. The atheist affirms then, that it is impossible to conceive that this world should not exist; or should exist any otherwise than it does exist, both in matter and in form. This seems to me infinitely absurd; for the atheist either has no ideas in his mind when he pronounces these words, "exists by the necessity of it's nature;" or he understands such a necessity of existence, that a supposition of the contrary would imply contradiction. If the atheist says, he has no idea of such a
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when he went so far as to deny, on the strength of a very weak sophism, that we are obliged to ascribe the creation or formation of the world to intelligence and wisdom, he turned, I think, the ridicule on himself, for he reasoned thus :

WHEN you investigate the proceedings of nature, you observe certain means, that seem, to you, proportioned to certain ends. You perceive too, that you cannot imitate nature any other way than by proportioning means to ends, and thus you frame that complex idea of wisdom, to which you ascribe the phænomena, and the imaginary final causes of them. But you are grossly mistaken when you assume, that nature acts by such means as seem to you proportioned to these ends. Here is a clock which marks the hours and minutes, and strikes regularly, at certain periods, a certain number of times. The inward construction of this clock is unknown to you. But you see one made, which, by the means of certain weights, produces all the same effects. Will you assert now, that the motions of the first clock are regulated by weights, because those of the second are so? You will be much deceived if you do, for the motions of the first clock are produced and regulated by a spring.

THIS argument would have some force in opposition to such naturalists as STRATO of Lampfacus, as DES CARTES, and as others who have made hypothetical worlds, and have pretended to account for all the phænomena by such laws of matter and motion as they have thought fit to establish. But in the present case it is a mere paralogism, and unworthy of the man who employed it, since it serves to explain and confirm that very reasoning which it is intended to oppose. The same motions are produced indeed by different means, but still these different means are proportioned alike to the same end, which
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proves the very thing I would prove, the intelligence of a workman.

WHEN we had done speaking of philosophers who admit the beginning of the world, we proceeded to those who deny it; and DAMON seemed to think himself strongly intrenched in the system of it's eternity. As we cannot conceive, said he, that matter was created and brought out of nothing, so we cannot conceive, neither, that matter could of itself produce motion, nor that matter and motion together could produce thought. But there arises from hence no necessity of assuming, that there is any superior Being. Matter, motion, thought are eternal, and have been always what they are. The same nature, and the same course of things, that exist actually, have always existed.

To this it was easy to answer, that if I agreed with him in owning the eternity of the world, this concession would not infirm the proofs I had brought of an eternal Being, distinct from the world, as the workman is from his work. We may allow the world to be eternal, without allowing that it is the sole eternal Being. All that exists, has a cause of it's existence, either out of itself, or in itself. It has no cause of it's existence out of itself, if it is the sole eternal Being. It has this cause then within itself, and exists by the necessity of it's own nature. The atheist affirms then, that it is impossible to conceive that this world should not exist; or should exist any otherwise than it does exist, both in matter and in form. This seems to me infinitely absurd; for the atheist either has no ideas in his mind when he pronounces these words, "exists by the necessity of it's nature;" or he understands such a necessity of existence, that a supposition of the contrary would imply contradiction. If the atheist says, he has no idea of such a
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necessity, he has then no idea of the eternity of the world. If he says, as DAMON did say, that he can no more conceive this world not to exist, or to exist differently from its present existence, than he can conceive the equality of twice two to four not to exist, he says nothing to the purpose; since the necessity of existence, according to him, cannot be admitted till he has given us another definition of what we are to understand by these words; and another definition, intelligible and reasonable, I think, he never will be able to give.

AFTER having pushed this argument beyond reply, which I borrowed but did not weaken, I added, that ARISTOTLE, and other antient philosophers, who believed the world eternal, did not fall into the absurdity of believing it uncaused. They believed it eternal, in the order of time, but they believed it the effect of a superior cause, in the order of causality. The distinction is, perhaps, too metaphysical, but it serves to shew, since they made it, to what shifts they were driven in maintaining the eternity of the world, and how little reason the modern atheist has to lean on their authority.

FROM refuting his opinions, I was led to advance one of my own, and to assert, that this fact, "The world had a beginning," is a fact, founded on such a tradition, as no reasonable man can refuse to accept. This is the paradox, in advancing of which, I had, not only DAMON, but almost all those who were present, against me. It took up the rest of our conversation, and I will tell you, not only what I said, to support my opinion then, but what has come into my thoughts upon the same subject since.

Tho' we cannot have, strictly speaking, a certain knowledge of any fact whereof we have not been ourselves witnesses, yet are there several such facts whereof we cannot doubt. High probability must stand often in lieu of certainty, or we must be, every moment, at a loss how to form our opinions and to regulate our conduct. Such is our condition, and we cannot think it unreasonably imposed, since we are able, by a right use of our reason, to ascend thro' various degrees from absolute improbability, which is little distant from evident falshood, to that degree of probability which is little distant from evident truth. On this principle let us proceed to consider, how high this proposition, "The world had a beginning," stands in the scale of probability. We shall find, perhaps, that it stands too high to have the proposition pass for a paradox, when I have told you what was said in conversation, and what has occurred to me since, on the same subject.

AN historical fact, which contains nothing that contradicts general experience, and our own observation, has already the appearance of probability; and, if it be supported by the testimony of proper witnesses, it acquires all the appearances of truth; that is, it becomes really probable in the highest degree. A fact, on the other hand, which is repugnant to experience, shocks us from the first; and if we receive it afterwards for a true fact, we receive it on outward authority, not on inward conviction. Now to do so is extremely absurd; since the same experience that contradicts this particular fact, affirms this general fact, that men lie very often, and that their authority alone is a very frail foundation of assent.

It may seem a little extraordinary, and perhaps chimerical, to our first thoughts, to examine which is most conformable to experience, the eternity of the world, or the beginning of
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it in time; and it would be really so, if, to constitute this conformity to experience, it were strictly necessary, on every occasion, to cite a fact of similar kind. But there is no such necessity in the nature of things, and this conformity may be sufficiently constituted otherwise. Were it not so, our ignorance would produce very contrary effects, equally absurd; for this mother of superstitious credulity, would be the mother likewise of most unreasonable incredulity.

THE probability of a fact, whereof there are frequent and notorious examples, may force our assent at once, like those which happen constantly in the ordinary course of things. But still it is true, that a fact of which we find no precise example within our knowledge, may have a conformity, properly so called, with our experience. The probability arising from this sort of conformity will not be perceived, indeed, so soon as the other, but when it is perceived, will determine alike. This case may be compared to that of the mathematician, who arrives at truth by a long process of demonstration, and who can doubt of this truth afterward, no more than he doubted of those self-evident truths which carry instantaneous conviction to the mind.

A FACT may be, in the respect we speak of here, indifferent. We may discover, in our experience, none of the same sort; and yet none that imply contradiction with it. Such a fact, therefore, is merely new; and experience will be far from teaching us to reject any fact on this account alone. When such facts, therefore, new to us, according to the extent of our knowledge, but not so to other men, are attested by credible witnesses, he must act very unreasonably, who refuses to give that degree of assent to them, which is proportionable to the credibility of the witnesses. Again, the fact may be conform-
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able to experience by a certain analogy physical or moral, if not by particular examples, and may be admitted therefore, on proper testimony, more easily still, than one of those which I called indifferent. One rests wholly on testimony, but experience gives to the other an indirect, if not a direct, confirmation.

LET me quote a story, which will serve to illustrate all I have been saying. A certain king of Siam was firmly persuaded that SOMMONA-CODOM had straddled over the gulph of Bengal; that the print of his right foot was seen at Pra-bat, and that of his left foot at Lanca. This pious legend was certainly repugnant to his majesty's experience, the first foundation of probability: and he fell into the absurdity of believing it on the most precarious of human authorities, the authority of his priests, who had taught him, perhaps, that the merit of his faith in the legend of SOMMONA-CODOM increased as the probability of what it contained diminished. When the Dutch ambassador assured the same prince, that the surface of the water hardened so much in his country, during the winter, that men, and beasts, and heavy carriages passed over it, the prince treated him as a liar. He knew no example of this kind: and the seeming nonconformity to experience, in this case, had the effect which the real nonconformity to experience should have had in the other. I call this a seeming nonconformity; because altho' the good Siamese knew no example, in point, of what the ambassador told him, yet he might have reflected on several particular objects of his knowledge, that would have brought it up to a real conformity. He knew, for I think the art of casting cannon was known in his country, that extreme heat could give fluidity to the hardest metals: from whence he might have concluded, very naturally, that extreme cold was capable of producing a very

contrary effect, that of condensing and hardening fluid substances. In his country there was no ice ; but he knew that there fell sometimes on the neighboring mountains of Ava, of Pegu, and of Laos, a certain white cold and solid substance, which was nothing else than water, condensed and hardened in one season, and melting and flowing in another. He was a man of good sense, they say, and therefore we may believe that these considerations discovering to him a real, tho' not exact, conformity to his experience, he gave credit to the Dutchman afterwards.

LET us consider now, on our part, whether there are not facts that contain all that is necessary to establish the highest probability, tho' there are no examples of the same, and tho' we should allow, that a bare non-repugnancy to experience, or a strong analogy to it, do not afford sufficient grounds of probability. Suppose then a fact, preserved in history or tradition, which has the two conditions of non-repugnancy and of analogy, and the contrary to which cannot be asserted without absurdity. If the negative be absurd, is it not agreeable to right reason that we adhere to the affirmative ?

It may be said, perhaps, that the supposition I make cannot have place in historical facts, that these are in some sort arbitrary, they may be affirmed or denied, according to the credibility of the testimony. That JULIUS CÆSAR conquered the Britons, or that GENGHIZ-CAN conquered China, may be true ; but it may be true, likewise, that CÆSAR was beat by the Britons, and that GENGHIZ-CAN did not even march into China. It may be said, that when such facts, as we meet with frequently in the romances of all kinds, are concerned, we may affirm that the contrary is true, or that no such events ever happened ; but that it will not follow, that an historical or

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traditional fact is true, because it appears to us, that to suppose the contrary is absurd. I enter no further into this disquisition, but I content myself to say, that there is, at least, one such fact conveyed to us by tradition, the truth of which we must admit, because it is absurd to assume the contrary, and because one or the other must be necessarily true. The fact I mean is this, that the world, we inhabit, had a beginning in time, and the same may be said of our whole solar system, and of the whole system of the universe. Now this fact being denied very dogmatically, and there neither being nor ever having been any living cotemporary human testimony for it or against it, we must, I think, be decided in this case, by considering, whether the beginning or eternity of the world implies any contradiction with what we know, or is repugnant to our clearest, most distinct, and best determined ideas. One of these facts must be true, since the world exists actually. If it can be shewn, therefore, that the opinion of its eternity is an absurd opinion, I must be convinced that it had a commencement.

To prove the absurdity of the former, there seems to be a very obvious method, and an argument the more conclusive, because it is, in opposition to the atheist, an argument "ad hominem," an argument drawn from the only solution of one of the greatest difficulties which the theist proposes to him. If this solution be not good, he remains without a reply, and if it be good, as I think indeed that it is sufficient to answer this particular difficulty, there arises from it an argument against himself, much stronger than that which the theist opposed to him, and which I am ready to acknowledge, that he has fully answered. What is here said, requires to be explained by a deduction of particulars.

HE who denies the commencement, and asserts the eternity of the world, must believe that this planet of ours has been, from all eternity, such as we see that it is. I say, that he must believe it to be so, since, if he admitted such changes in it as had overturned the whole order of physical nature, destroyed all the species of animals, and confounded all the elements in a new chaos, the dispute would be over, and he convicted, at once, of the grossest absurdity, because a God, a *Δημιουργος*, would be as necessary in this case, as in that of an original creation. In short, such a renewal of the world requiring no less wisdom and power than the formation of it, the dispute, on the atheist's part, would sink into a cavil about words. He is obliged therefore to maintain, that this planet of ours has been always, upon the whole, much what it is; that there have been, from eternity, the same general laws, and the same order of physical nature; an infinite succession of material causes and effects, blind causes of uniform effects, uniform in kind, if not in degree; causes, which have been effects; effects, which become causes in their turn, and proceed in this manner round the circle of eternity. When we quote to the atheist the universal consent of tradition, in affirming that the world had a beginning, he laughs at the proof. Whether he has any right to do so, will be seen presently. In the meantime, we cannot be surprised that he, who rejects a demonstration, should pay no regard to a tradition; but we may be well surprised, when, following the atheist on, we find him calling tradition to his aid, and leaning wholly upon it.

IF the world is eternal, why does our knowledge of it go no further back, why have we not more antient memorials, says the divine? The same reason, says the atheist, which hinders us from having records, where we have any, beyond

two or three thousand years in a space of five or six thousand, to which, according to you, the antiquity of the world extends, is just as good to hinder us from seeing further backwards, in a longer, and even in an infinite space of time. Now here theology comes in to the aid of atheism, as it does upon more occasions than this. The history, which is ascribed to the legislator of the Jews, and which it is required that we should believe implicitly, assures us, that the world was once entirely drowned; and thro' the whole course of sacred, as well as profane, scriptures, we hear of other inundations, of earthquakes, of plagues, of devastations of countries, and of captivities of people, by all, or some of which, not only numbers of men have been destroyed, but whole political societies have been lost. Thus the atheist has it in his power to make the same use of holy writ, which the divine makes of profane history; that is, he adopts whatever makes for his purpose, and rejects whatever does not. He finds antient governments frequently dissolved, and new ones rising. The records of the former, as well as their laws and customs, perish with them. The latter remain often very long in ignorance and barbarity, and have not the means, nor even the desire, of conveying the events of their own time, nor the traditions of former times by authentic records to posterity. He will not fail to observe, that all we know of antient history, except those broken scraps of it which Jewish traditions mention, has come down to us from the Greeks; that many centuries passed, after the deluge, before CADMUS, or any one else, carried the use of letters to this people; and that this people, not having employed them to write history till many centuries afterwards, it is not astonishing that we know as little as we do concerning times more antient than those. The atheist triumphs in this answer to the divine, and tho' no man abhors his cause more than I do, I think him thus far in the right. But the
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scene will soon change, if a thief interposes. His answer to the divine's question will indeed stand good, but out of this very answer there will arise a decisive argument against him.

WHEN the atheist has founded the deluge of DEUCALION high, and admitted, for the sake of his argument, that of NOAH; when he has added to these, all those other deluges, of which tradition speaks, that of XISUTHRUS, that of OGYGES, that which the Chinese annals mention, that whereof the priests of Sais informed SOLON, and that, if it was not the same, whereof the memory had been preserved among the people of America, besides a multitude of devastations of other kinds, he will think himself very strong. But the thief may ask him a very puzzling question, Was there any thing supernatural in the production of these terrible catastrophes? The divine might answer, that there was; but he could not: for if he did, he would acknowledge the existence of a supreme Being, which he denies. It remains then, that all he has said about the immutable order and laws of nature, which have maintained the world in much the same state, and such as it is, from all eternity, must pass for nothing, and the thief will insist, that if such events as these, which tend directly to the dissolution of our planet, and the extermination of the whole human race, have been produced so often, in five or six thousand years, by the action of blind causes, matter and motion alone, it is repugnant to common sense to believe, either that such events have not happened an infinite number of times, in an infinite space of time; or that having so happened, they should not have once destroyed the world entirely, and made the supposition of a God necessary to restore it to the state in which we see it. The thief will insist further against the atheist, that it is absurd to confine these phenomena to such bounds, and to accom-

pany them with just such circumstances as suit his purpose. The purpose of the atheist required that these destructions of mankind should happen often enough to defend his hypothesis against that question, Why have we not more antient memorials of the world, and of the inhabitants of it? What his purpose required, is exactly answered, by the eternal complaisance of blind material causes. The world was never entirely destroyed nor mankind entirely exterminated, nor any necessity created of a God to restore them. But there have been as many of these destructions, as may be improved to extricate the atheist out of the difficulty which is laid in his way.

THE divine would sit down well satisfied with the state to which, I suppose, the dispute is reduced by the theist, if he had nothing more at heart, than to maintain the existence of God, by maintaining the commencement of the world. But he has something more at heart, it must have commenced, it must have been renewed, and it must have been repeopled, in the manner MOSES relates, and just at the time which he fixes, according to the calculations that learned men have grounded on the genealogies contained in the book of Genesis. For this purpose a system has been invented by crowding profane into the extent of sacred chronology, and by making as many anecdotes of the former, as can be so made, seem to coincide with those of the latter. Divines would be thought to prove the latter by concurrent evidence; but in reality they assume it to be true, and by this assumption alone, can the violence, with which they drag profane anecdotes to their purpose, be in any sort excused. That I may not quote to you any of those numberless heavy writers, who have taken this task upon them, I will bring forward on this occasion Mr. de MEAUX, the honor of the Gallican or rather of the christian church, and the shame of that of Rome. This writer, who
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possessed in the highest degree the talent of seducing the imagination, when he could not convince the judgment, running over, in his discourse on universal history, those ages which succeeded the deluge, in a very agreeable manner, but on very precarious authority, makes no scruple of affirming, that there is no antient history wherein the marks of a new world do not appear manifestly in these early times, and long after them. These endeavors to confirm the Mosaic system by a multitude of uncertain traditions, as well as the history itself, compiled, no doubt, from other traditions, might be sufficient to take all authority from tradition, if these authors did not mistake the notion of it, and if a just distinction, that ought to be made, did not escape them.

TRADITION is first oral, the first authors of it unknown: and when it comes afterwards into history, the genealogical descent of it nothing more than tradition, and we must say, in general, very absurdly, that it proves itself, or, very truly, that it has no proof at all. From hence it follows, that particular circumstantial facts, conveyed to us by particular traditions, are destitute of historical proof. But still it will be agreeable to nature and reason, that the unanimous concurrence of many traditions, to which no contrary traditions can be opposed, may constitute the truth of a general fact. Public report, as PLINY the younger observes, relates facts in the gross, and naked of circumstances. So it must do, to deserve any credit; and so does this tradition, that the world had a beginning. It is rather a fact, resulting from the concurrence of traditions, than a fact founded on the authority of any. Nothing can be less credible than all that we read in antient story, about the Assyrians for instance. It is a wild heap of inconsistent traditions which cannot be reconciled, nor verified for want of an historical criterion. CTESIAS, it is said, boasted that he had extracted

tracted the materials of his history, whilst he was in the service of the king of Persia, out of the authentic records of that monarchy. But his account, those of other Greek writers, and even those of the Old Testament, are so contrary to one another, and, on the whole, so improbable, that they may be all comprehended under the name of Assyriacs, which ARISTOTLE brought into proverbial use, and which was meant to signify all sorts of fabulous relations. What are we now to believe in this case? Not any particular tradition, to be sure; but thus much, in general, that there was an empire once founded in Asia, to which the Assyrians gave their name.

THESE traditions, those of Egypt, and many of Greece, come from those dark ages which may be called heroical or fabulous, after VARRO the most learned of the Romans. More modern Greeks, like echoes, repeated these traditions, and, in repeating, multiplied them all, so that the sound of them rings still in our ears, and they remain objects of learned curiosity. Shall we give credit now to the traditions, that came down from fabulous ages, about the expedition of the Argonauts; about the war of Thebes, and that of Troy; about the adventures of HERCULES, of THESEUS, and a multitude of other romantic stories? No, most certainly. It would be ridiculous to give credit to any of them. But it is not ridiculous, it is reasonable, to be persuaded that they had some foundation in the truth of things. Every tradition, considered apart, may be safely denied; because no one of them has an historical proof: but yet a truth, which may be called with little impropriety historical, results from the combination of all these fabulous traditions. There were, no doubt, in unknown ages, maritime expeditions, famous leagues, cruel wars, and heroes who rendered their names illustrious.

ONE tradition reports, that PERSEUS carried a colony into the east; another, that TITHONUS did the same "usque ad Æthiopas," as far as the Indies. Is not the voyage of Io, daughter of INACHUS, into Egypt long before, and the expedition of the Cimmerians into Asia long after, famous in tradition? Many others of the same kind might be mentioned; and tho' they are all fabulous, they leave no reason to doubt, that arts and sciences, and even barbarity, were carried from the west to the east, as well as from the east to the west, in ages quite unknown to us; which is enough to shake the authority of that particular history wherein it is reported, that the world was repopled from one spot, and by one family, after an universal deluge. But I need insist on this head no longer. So many general truths, of which it is impossible to doubt, result from the concurrence of fabulous traditions, that there remains no reason to doubt of the truth of this fact, "The world had a beginning."

WILL it be said, that if there has been such a tradition, it has not been so universal as to establish this truth, according to my rule? Left this should be said, it is necessary that I prove the universality of it; and that by shewing, particularly, for what reasons we admit other facts to be true, though founded only on tradition, it may appear that the beginning of the world is still better founded, and this important tradition advantageously distinguished from all others.

WHILST I am writing on this subject, to you, a dissertation, I had never seen before, is fallen into my hands. The author* of it pretends not only to prove, that the world had a beginning, but also, that this beginning was the same which

MOSES.

* JACQUELOT.

MOSES gives it. He is so fond of the second proposition, that he employs all his skill and all his learning to establish it. He ventures to assert, that the history of the world was very well known, when that of MOSES became public by the spreading of the gospel; that profane history agreed with sacred, in this respect, and did not reach beyond the bounds MOSES had set. One would think that these writers imagine, for this writer is a divine too, that none but themselves can read, and that they have still the advantage, which they had before the resurrection of letters, the advantage of imposing whatever they please on an ignorant world. The world had a beginning; tradition proves it had. But tradition is far from proving that it began, either in the manner MOSES relates, or at the time which he is thought to have fixed. Profane and sacred history were as little agreed, when christianity was published and the Jewish scriptures were better known, as they are at this time; notwithstanding all the pains taken by JOSEPHUS, EUSEBIUS, and others, to reconcile them; and notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken, by modern scholars, to confirm sacred by profane anecdotes.

LET us neglect such writers, therefore, who make a shew of learning, always futile, and often false. Let us examine and compare for ourselves; look into the authors they cite; but trust neither their citations nor their reasonings. DIODORUS the Sicilian, and STRABO, in the reign of AUGUSTUS; PLINY and PLUTARCH in those of VESPASIAN and TRAJAN, very respectable authors certainly, give us a different idea of their knowledge in the history of the world, from that which the author of this dissertation would give us. They knew a little better than this modern writer, what histories and what traditions they had of any authenticity. They made no great account of those canticles or hymns, of those inscriptions and

other expedients, which had been employed, in more early times, to preserve the memory of past events, and concerning which the writer we refer to, enters into a chimerical and tiresome detail. These antient writers looked on their histories to be more modern, and their traditions to be more antient, than our tribe of scholars would make them, the last especially. That profound antiquity, wherein these men affect dogmatically to make great discoveries, with very particular and critical exactness, was, for the others, a dark abyss, wherein they saw but few objects, and those few rather general than particular, and, on the whole, very imperfect. They acknowledged, that the first of the Greek historians had writ no earlier than the time about which the Persians began to make their expeditions into Europe. They confessed, that neighboring nations had some historical monuments of a much greater antiquity; but they confessed too, that these monuments were very imperfect and very precarious, broken into discordant anecdotes, and mingled up with romance and poetical fiction. In a word, they owned themselves able to pierce a very little way into antiquity; but none of them pretended, that the bounds of their historical knowledge were the bounds of antiquity. Let us see now, whether the beginning of the world may not be, even at this time, reputed equivalent to the best established historical fact, notwithstanding the avowed ignorance of the most learned and curious inquirers, who wrote, two thousand years ago, about the beginning of nations, and much more of the world.

THE Egyptians seem to have been reputed the most antient, or one of the most antient, nations of the world, by the Greeks, from whom all our knowledge of profane history descends. They gave to their nation an immense antiquity, and in part, perhaps, fabulous. But I am at a loss, however, to discover

what means, and therefore what right, the scholars of these ages have to decide, as dogmatically as they have done, about the Egyptian dynasties. Why, for instance, the jesuit PETAVIUS required that we should, upon his word, reject them all? Or, why the author of the dissertation, after touching the matter very lightly and very superficially, should expect to be believed, when he conjectures that there were no monuments of Egyptian antiquity later than MOERIS, tho' he has in this the authority of as great a man as MARSHAM on his side? DICEARCHUS, the disciple of ARISTOTLE, who had not, most certainly, inspired him with much credulity in antient traditions, had studied the antiquities of Egypt. MANETHO had done the same in the time of PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS, and ERATOSTHENES in the time of PTOLEMY EVERGETES. The first of the two was himself an Egyptian, and had extracted his chronology and history from the books of MERCURY, that is, from the sacred and most authentic writings of the Egyptians. Why has his chronology been called in question, or why was it not received by christian writers beyond a certain epocha? Is there any pretence to say, that he altered what he found in the books of MERCURY; as we know that JULIUS AFRICANUS, and EUSEBIUS, altered and transposed his dynasties, to make them, as near as they could, conformable to the mosaic chronology? With what front can we suspect the authenticity of books, compiled and preserved by egyptian priests, when we receive the old testament on the faith of jewish scribes, a most ignorant and lying race? Were the sacred books of the Egyptians taken from them, by a king of Persia? DIODORUS says it. But the same DIODORUS assures us, that the Egyptians purchased their scriptures again, and that they were restored to them by the eunuch BAGOAS: whereas the scriptures of the Jews were lost, more than once; and how they were recovered, the last time at least, is unknown

known to us : nay, whether they were recovered at all, in a strict sense, may be, and has been, questioned by some Christians and Jews too. Is the immense antiquity, which MANETHO ascribed to his nation, or the tales of OSIRIS, and ISIS, and TYPHON, too ridiculous to be admitted? I shall not plead in favor of them. But, in truth, are the anecdotes of jewish antiquity a whit more conformable to experience, to reason, and to all our notions of things divine or human, whatever regard we may pay to some passages in the Pentateuch, because of the use to which they are put by theology. No man, who has the least pretence to candor, and who dares speak out, will assert so much. But still, how little credit soever we may give to the particular traditions of either sort, all of them together are the general voice of antiquity, and extort our assent to this truth, "The world had a beginning."

THIS truth seems to have been propagated by them in those hieroglyphs, and that sacred language, wherein they recorded whatever was most antient and most respected. HORUS, or the world, was represented like a youth whose beard was not yet grown. An egg was the famous symbol of the generation, as well as figure, of the world ; and the Thebans, who were the most antient egyptian dynasty, had an hieroglyphical representation of the Divinity with an egg coming out of his mouth ; which symbol of an egg was adopted by the Phœnicians, and by the Persians, and became an object of worship in the orgia, or mysteries of BACCHUS. These monuments came down from the first MERCURY, at whose antiquity we cannot so much as guess ; for the second, who followed, and probably very long after him, our chronologers are obliged to place as high as the age of MOSES or of JOSHUA.

SANCHONIATHON, that we may say something of phœnician as well as egyptian traditions of this sort, is another author that may vie, perhaps, with the most antient for antiquity. BOCHART, and all our divines, think fit to place him in the time of GIDEON. It is not convenient for them that he should stand backwarder. They build their assertion on a passage concerning him in the writings of PORPHYRY, who says, that SANCHONIATHON had the materials of his history from JEROMBAL, a priest of the god JAO. Now JEROMBAL sounds too like to JERUBAAL, the name GIDEON wears in scripture, and JAO sounds too like JEHOVAH, to leave any doubt on this subject in the minds of men who can make systems and write volumes on the affinity of sounds. SANCHONIATHON then, being cotemporary to GIDEON, had a knowledge of the book of MOSES, and took from thence all he knew concerning the beginning of the world; so that these two are but one and the same tradition, according to this opinion. But there is great reason to doubt of the first part, and the second is evidently false.---The anachronism of PORPHYRY, who supposed SEMIRAMIS cotemporary with the siege of Troy, will not make SANCHONIATHON cotemporary with GIDEON: since the last was, unluckily, not a priest, and since the JEROMBAL, from whose writings the phœnician historian is said to have borrowed, was one. The answers made to this objection are trifling. A pagan, it is said, might take a general of an army for a priest, and PORPHYRY was guilty of this blunder. The Jews called their chiefs or principal men sometimes priests, it is said. Therefore PORPHYRY, who was no more a Jew than he was a Christian, might make use of an appellation peculiar to the Jews.---But, further, in what time soever SANCHONIATHON lived, he did not relate what he said concerning the commencement of the world from the mosaic history, or any other jewish traditions; since he affirmed positively

positively that he derived the cosmogony from TAAUT or MERCURY. Have we not reason to be surprised, as much as we are accustomed to it, at the boldness of scholars who presume to oppose their frivolous conjectures, to what an historian himself says of the materials which he followed?---The second part of what is said concerning this phœnician historian being false, it follows that SANCHONIATHON, one of the most antient writers whose name is come down to us, SANCHONIATHON, a lover and follower of truth, according to the etymology of his name, learned and curious in searching the original of things, furnished with the most authentic materials that Egypt and Phœnicia could afford him, and writing in an age when the authenticity of these materials might be known, affirmed the beginning of the world; and is, therefore, a voucher of the same truth, distinct from MOSES.

WHETHER the books of the Pentateuch were writ by MOSES himself, or whether the traditions contained in them were compiled after his time, which is not at all improbable; certain it is, that these traditions are of very great antiquity. Now these traditions confirm the same general fact, in a more circumstantial account of it, than we may suppose that SANCHONIATHON gave. I have read that SIMPLICIUS laughed at the whole story, and at GRAMMATICUS for quoting some passages of it. This interpreter of ARISTOTLE affirmed, that the whole was taken from egyptian fables. But SIMPLICIUS might have considered, as we do, that how ridiculous soever the circumstances might be, the fact, affirmed by so many traditions, might be true, tho' he was led to deny it by arguments which ARISTOTLE himself owned to be very problematical. ARISTOTLE, who employed logic very absurdly in physics, might employ it, as absurdly, about history and tradition. Let it be, that the account MOSES gives of the creation, and the cosmogony of SANCHONIATHON, are alike fabulous; yet still the
general

general fact, advanced by them, may be reputed true. The various fables annexed to it do, in effect, prove it; since it is not likely that they would have been invented, if the foundation of them had not been laid in tradition, if there had not been a stock of truth whereon to graft them.

I am as much persuaded, as SIMPLICIUS himself, that the Israelites might borrow some egyptian traditions, as it is notorious that they borrowed many civil and religious institutions from the same people. I can believe too, on the faith of learned men, that there is some analogy between the mosaic account of the creation and the phœnician cosmogony. There is nothing extraordinary to alter the state of the question in this. I can believe too, that the six times, in which God made the world, according to an antient tradition of the Persians, are relative to the six days in which he made it, according to the jewish traditions. The Israelites had been slaves to the Egyptians, captives among the Chaldeans, and subjects to the Persians. They boasted their descent from ABRAHAM; and the magi acknowledged this patriarch for their legislator, and for the institutor of their religion. The reformation, which ZOROASTER made in this, was made after the return of some of the Jews, from Bâbylon, into their own country. But it was made, according to HIDE and other modern critics, in the reign of DARIUS, son of HYSTASPES, a little before ESDRAS and NEHEMIAS went from the court of Persia to restore the religion, to settle the government, and to compile the traditions of the Jews at Jerusalem. ESDRAS set out from Persia and Babylonia when the disputes between the magians and the sabrans ran the highest, and when the new doctrines of ZOROASTER prevailed in the first fervor of reformation. ESDRAS, therefore, and the other Jews, who could not fail to be favorable to the first sect, and averse to the latter, might very

well take, as it is highly probable that they did, the names of the months, the names of angels, many ridiculous anecdotes, and, among the rest, some concerning the creation, from the magians. The tradition was common to all these nations, but they invented and they borrowed, from one another, various circumstances, in which they dressed it up differently, each historian according to his fancy, and conformably to the established system of his religion. This hypothesis is so well founded, and so very probable, that our divines do nothing better than weaken the credibility of the fact, when they assume, on the similitude of some circumstances, that this tradition, as well as the belief of one God, was preserved by the Jews alone.

THEY were both much more antient among the Persians than ZOROASTER or ZERDUSHT. We have to do here only with the first: and as to that, PORPHYRY cites in his treatise, "*De antro nympharum*," a certain EUBULUS, who writ the history of MITHRAS, and assured in it, that ZOROASTER consecrated a round grotto, such as nature had formed it, adorned with flowers and watered by springs, to MITHRAS, the creator of all things, which grotto was the symbol of the world, as the world is the work of MITHRAS. The same reformer instituted festivals likewise to commemorate the beginning of it; and not content with this, he descended into particulars; fixed the number of days contained in every one of the fix times that had been imagined; and marked the gradual progress of the creation in each of them.

THE Chaldeans may be coupled, on this occasion, with the Persians, as the Phœnicians and the Israelites were with the Egyptians. They were all distinct nations; they had all their distinct religions and traditions; but they all agreed in
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one, the beginning of the world, how many different fictions soever they might relate concerning the time and manner of this beginning. I do not cite the chaldaic oracles. They were as much forged or corrupted, perhaps, as the sibylline verses. But we have no need of leaning on their authority. EUSEBIUS has preserved a remarkable passage that was in the history of BEROSUS. An antient tradition of the Chaldæans reported, that our world was formed out of a chaos. All was night and water, till BEL cut this night in two, separated the heavens from the earth, and formed the world. The stars, the sun, the moon, and the planets, were the productions, according to this tradition, of the same BEL, by which name the Chaldæans meant to signify the KNEPH of the orthodox Egyptians, their own invisible MITHRAS, or, in one word, the supreme Being.

I KNOW very well that DIODORUS says, the Chaldæans believed the world eternal by it's nature, and incapable of generation or corruption. But, in the first place, the authority of BEROSUS seems to deserve, on this occasion, much more credit than that of DIODORUS, not only because he was much nearer to the times of which he speaks, but because he was a babylonian and a priest, and, therefore, better instructed, without doubt, than the latter in the traditions of his own country.--- In the next place, the difficulty of reconciling these two authors, does not seem insuperable. The Greek, in the beginning of his first book, speaks of those, who believed the world eternal, and of those, who were of a contrary opinion. But this dispute seems to have risen among the naturalists or the learned, as he calls them, and not among those who contented themselves to know, about past events, what the history and tradition of their country taught them.----Thus we may understand, and should, I think, understand what he says of

the Chaldæans; for after having said, that they maintained the eternity of the world, and believed it incapable of generation or corruption, he adds, that they believed the world to be governed by a divine providence, and every thing which happened, to be ordered by the gods, not to happen by chance. Now the greatest part of what he says being manifestly an account of philosophical opinions, and not of facts preserved in history or in tradition, it seems most natural to understand the whole in the same manner; besides which, it is to be considered, that there might be a tradition of the commencement, and that there could be none of the eternity of the world. From all which, it seems evident to me, that the whole of what DIODORUS says, is applicable to philosophical opinions alone, which are sometimes opposed to matters of fact sufficiently established; whereas every such hypothesis should have it's foundation in fact, not to be chimerical. BEROSUS relates what he found in the chaldaic traditions; and DIODORUS tells us, what the opinions were of some philosophers at least. We shall see presently, that this opposition of a philosophical hypothesis to tradition was not confined to Egypt or Chaldæa, and that it does not affect the truth of the proposition we defend.

STRABO relates, in his fifteenth book, that the brachmans in India agreed with the Greeks in many things, and particularly in this, that "the world had a beginning;" to which he adds, and that "it will be destroyed." Advantage may be taken from hence to turn my own way of reasoning against me. It may be said, that, since the brachmans believed the future destruction of the world, which could not be the subject of any tradition, and was not certainly revealed to them by prophecy, the assumed commencement of the world might be, and certainly was, merely founded, as well as it's assumed
destruction,

destruction, on their philosophical speculations. It may be said, that we ought to explain this passage of STRABO, much as I have explained that of DIODORUS, and to suppose the whole system of these indian brachmans philosophical.

I SHALL have occasion to consider, more at length, the true difference between a tradition of opinion, and a tradition of fact. But, in the mean time, I observe, that since the opinion of the future destruction of the world, founded manifestly in speculation, was entertained by the Greeks, at the same time as the opinion of it's beginning, founded not less manifestly in tradition; and since STRABO assures us, that there was a great conformity between the opinions of the Greeks, and the opinions of the Indians, we may well believe that there was the same conformity between the principles on which their opinions were framed. Those among the Greeks, who believed the world had a beginning, believed it on the faith of tradition. They who imagined it would have an end, were led to imagine so both by physical and metaphysical speculation. Since they were sure it had a beginning, they concluded, from both, that it would have an end, and grafted opinion on fact. Thus it happened among the Greeks, and thus it might happen among the Indians.

I OBSERVE, in the next place, that if there was any author of equal authority, who asserted that the brachmans believed the eternity of the world, to oppose to STRABO, as we have BEROSUS, to oppose to DIODORUS, this circumstance might afford some pretence to say that the brachmans, having framed, from observations of the present state of the material world, an opinion that it would be some time or other destroyed by age or accident, were led from thence, by carrying their speculations backwards, to the opinion that it had a beginning: but

but that as there is no such authority to oppose to STRABO, we ought to conclude, that the knowledge they had by tradition of the beginning of the world, led them to believe, on physical observation and metaphysical reasoning, it's future destruction, rather than to conclude this philosophical conjecture led them to imagine, without any foundation in tradition, that the world had a beginning. So that I might very well quote the Indians, as an antient nation who concurred in establishing the truth of this fact on the faith of their traditions.

I MIGHT go further on to the eastward, and bring the testimony of the Chinese, on the same side : a most antient nation surely, and possessed of more antient records, perhaps, than any other, tho' we have been little acquainted till very lately with their history, chronology, and traditions. But I choose to proceed in quoting authors better known to us, and shall therefore cite once more STRABO, whose authority, of all the antient writers, is perhaps of the greatest weight. STRABO represents the Æthiopians rather barbarous than civilised ; and yet this people believed a supreme immortal Being, the first cause of all things. This people therefore believed the beginning of the world, and this people could not fail to have most antient traditions, since, as rude as they were, the use of letters had been known by them from a time immemorial. Enough has been said of the most antient nations that are mentioned in history ; and if we descend to the Greeks, modern, with respect to them, tho' antient, with respect to us, we shall find the same tradition established, and further reasons to persuade that it was universal, allegorised, disguised, disputed, and even weakened by time ; but still universally received, and strongest as we remount highest in our inquiries after it. Such it was when the Greeks, from whom it has descended to us, adopted and transmitted it. This tradition seems to rise out of the abyss
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of time with the impetuosity of a great source. But then as the water, which spouted out with much noise and force in the beginning, runs silently and gently on, the further it runs; so this tradition grew weaker, but continued to run, when the authors, whom we read at this time, began to write.

THE Egyptians were the first masters of the Greeks. Before any of these went into Egypt to acquire science, they had received much instruction from thence; principles of religion and of civil government and anecdotes of antiquity. ORPHEUS may pass for the first of these egyptian missionaries; since he came from Egypt, tho' he was a thracian. I abandon the verses, which have gone under his name, as easily as the chaldaic oracles; but that I should believe there was no such man, is too much to require. ARISTOTLE asserted, as we learn in the first book of the nature of the gods, "ORPHBUM
"poetam nunquam fuisse." But we find in the same treatise, that ORPHEUS, MUSÆUS, HESIOD, and HOMER, were reckoned among the most antient poets. It would not be difficult, perhaps, to discover the principle of philosophical interest which induced ARISTOTLE to deny the existence of a man so famous in all the traditions of his country, and who had been the subject of so many fables. What traditions of greater antiquity than ORPHEUS the Greeks might have, we know not. But he was, certainly, the principal channel, thro' which that of the commencement of the world passed, from the Egyptians, to MUSÆUS, HESIOD, and HOMER, who received it first, or were confirmed in the belief of it, by this authority, and who preserved and propagated it in all their songs. PYTHAGORAS took it from the Egyptians likewise, and from other eastern nations. The whole italic school, and all those of the ionic, who did not prefer their own speculations to a matter of fact, and PLATO, the famous founder of the academy, followed them.

None

None of these invented the fact; but all of them dressed it up and delivered it down in different garbs, according, to their different systems of philosophy and religion. Even the christians, who came so long afterwards, helped to corrupt this tradition, by interpolating the famous verses, ascribed to ORPHEUS, which I have for this reason, among others, consented to lay aside; tho' still, if we believe these verses were composed by ONOMACRITUS, and not by ORPHEUS, they were composed at least as early as the age of PISISTRATUS, and contain, therefore, a very antient tradition.

I MIGHT have named, as the preservers of this tradition, among the Greeks, LINUS, THAMYRAS, and others. I might quote several Theogonias, that, it is said, were writ, like that of ARISTÆUS of the island of Proconnesus, or that of EPI-MENIDES of the island of Crete; all which would have been more ridiculous, than they were, if the beginning of the world had not been established in general belief; but I will mention, particularly, that of HESIOD only. He invokes the muses to sing the divine race of those immortal gods born of the earth, of the heavens; and of night, and who have been nourished by the salt sea. He goes on to bid them sing, how the gods and the earth were first made, with the rivers and the immense sea, with the stars and the heavens, with the gods who proceeded from them, and who are the authors of all good things. The same extravagant ideas are to be found in HOMER. The ocean was, according to him, the original of all things: and this notion coincides with that of THALES, who taught that all things proceeded from water as their material principle; by which he meant, no doubt, a certain chaos, wherein all the elements were confounded, till they were reduced into order, that is, till the world began.

THE proofs of the universality of this tradition, muffled up almost always in allegories and fables, are so numerous that we run more risk of being lost in the multiplicity of them, than of wanting any. ABARIS, the Scythian, had writ concerning these generations of gods. The world was not eternal in the system of the druids; and the antient Etrurians had their fables concerning the beginning of it, as well as the Egyptians and the Persians. The magi, says DIOGENES LA-
 ERTIUS, taught the generation of the gods: and by these gods, they understood fire, earth, and water. One of the magi, says HERODOTUS, sung the same generation, in an hymn, at all the sacrifices of the Persians.

As poetry personified every thing, antient philosophy, which was little else than poetry, animated all the elements; and every part of corporeal nature was filled with inferior divinities: for they acknowledged some that were superior, and even a supreme Being, who, far from being born of the world, made it, and was the father of gods and men; which puts me in mind of a passage in CICERO, where it is said, of this supreme Being, "*deos alios in terrâ, alios in lunâ, alios in reliquis mundi partes spargens Deus quasi ferebat.*"

It would have been very convenient for all the atheistical philosophers to have assumed the eternity of the world; but few of them durst do so, in opposition to this universality of tradition. They were obliged, therefore, either to reject this tradition, or to find some way of accounting for the existence of our planet, without supposing a self-existent *Δημιουργος*, or architect, the first mind of ANAXAGORAS. They chose the last, as the most easy task; and EPICURUS seemed to think his absurd system more likely to prevail, for this very reason,

because it assumed that the world had a beginning conformably to tradition. The author of the dissertation, I have before me, asserts, that all the philosophers, except the epicureans, under which name he comprehends all the atomic philosophers, held, that the world was eternal. A passage in the beginning of the fourth chapter of the treatise of CENSORINUS, "De die natali," led him into this error. What he advances may be proved false by a deduction of many particulars; but this may be said, with truth, that an opinion of the eternity of the world grew up or spread more after ARISTOTLE. Even the latter Platonicians took part on this head with the Peripatetics. They treated their master, as St. JEROM accuses others, and might have been accused himself, of treating the scriptures. Whatever new opinions philosophers framed, they dragged in the text of their masters to support them; which calls to my mind the proceedings of a Jew and of a stoical philosopher. PHILO found a trinity of divine hypostases in the writings of PLATO. He adopted the opinion, would needs find it in the sacred writings of his fathers, and reconcile the legislator of the Jews with the founder of the academy. Just so CLEANTHES endeavored to make the fables of ORPHEUS, MUSÆUS, HESIOD, and HOMER agree with what he taught concerning the gods, "Ut veterrimi poetæ, qui hæc ne suspicati quidem sint, stoici fuisse videantur.*" But after all, nothing can be more strongly asserted than the commencement of the world is by PLATO; and even ARISTOTLE himself acknowledged, that this philosopher thought it generated.

It may seem strange, but it is true, that we have a right to quote ARISTOTLE himself against the eternity of the world. He falls severely on the philosophical systems, that prevailed in his time, about the manner in which it began: but he acknowledges

* TULLY de nat. Deor. l. 2.

knowledges the uniformity of this antient tradition. How could he avoid to do so? Or how could it be otherwise, since the Greeks, in his time, had found it established among all the nations with whom they became acquainted either by commerce or by war? That happened to them, which has happened to us, in much later ages. We have pushed our discoveries through both hemispheres, and have found every where the same tradition established in the belief of mankind. The Chinese, whom I just mentioned above, would pass, like the Egyptians of old, for the most antient race of mankind; and they have traditions and records of immense antiquity and very singular authenticity. Now these traditions and these records agree, in one general fact, with all those that have been mentioned, "the world and mankind had a beginning." Even the name of a first man is preserved, and FOHI, who was the ORPHEUS of the east, precedes a very little their historical age. If we cross the South-sea, and visit the people of Peru or of Mexico, we find the same tradition established by universal consent, as they received it from their fathers. The world began, and PACHA CAMAC created it: the sun, that enlightens the world now, is not eternal; there have been other suns before this. If we cross the continent of America and proceed to the islands, we find the inhabitants of them in the same belief; at least we might have found them so, whilst they preserved the primitive simplicity of their manners, and the traditions of their forefathers, and till Spanish avarice and Spanish bigotry had exterminated the whole species.

AFTER saying so much concerning this tradition, it is necessary, I think, to consider, more particularly, what those principles are, on which reason determines us to receive general facts that have no foundation out of tradition, as we receive the most authentic historical truths. I have touched this

subject already ; but, to treat it with more order and clearness, let us descend into some detail of the essential differences between history and tradition. Let us consider what those attributes are which the latter wants, and for the want of which this testimony cannot produce historical probability : for if we find that there is not the same necessity of relation between these attributes and the general facts, spoken of here, as there is between these attributes and every historical account of past events ; in short, if we find that such general facts are not in the case of those, in order to judge of which the rules of historical criticism have been established, it will follow, that these facts may be received for true, as well as any, and much better than several of those that are contained in history, and to the truth of which we assent.

A STORY, circumstantially related, ought not to be received, on the faith of tradition ; since the least reflection on human nature is sufficient to shew, how unsafely a system of facts and circumstances can be trusted for its preservation to memory alone, and for its conveyance, to oral report alone ; how liable it must be to all those alterations, which the weakness of the human mind must cause necessarily, and which the corruption of the human heart will be sure to suggest. An event that is not circumstantially, is imperfectly related, not only with respect to the communication it should give, but with respect to the means we should have to judge of it's probability. The means I speak of are those of comparing the different parts of a story together, and of examining how well they coincide and render the whole consistent. In one case, then, different circumstances are to be compared ; in the other, all the traditions that can be collected on the same subject. Inconsistent circumstances destroy the credit of the story ; repugnant traditions, that of a general event. But the silence of some histories

ries or of some traditions will destroy the credit of neither, when all those who speak of the same thing agree. The jewish history has preserved the memory of a babylonian kingdom, which we call the second empire of the Assyrians, unknown to profane history and tradition, which make mention only of one. That antient monument too of RHAMSES, which GERMANICUS went to see in his voyage into Egypt, and the inscription on it, which contained the names of all the nations whom this prince had conquered in Asia, makes no mention of the Assyrians among those who became tributary to the Egyptian empire, as if their very name had not been known a century before the æra of NABONASSAR, though it mentions the Persians, the Bactrians, and others, who must have been such to the Assyrians, if an Assyrian empire had been established, as we assume, before the æra of NABONASSAR. Notwithstanding this silence, and the vain efforts of scholars to reconcile sacred and profane assyriacs, it would be unreasonable to deny that there was an Assyrian empire in Asia. Upon the whole matter, that "the world had a beginning," is a general fact, even better founded than this, "there has been an Assyrian monarchy." Some antient traditions, we have seen, do not concur with others about the latter. But I presume it would be hard to cite any body of antient traditions, wherein the commencement of the world is not directly affirmed, or constantly supposed. There is not even the silence of tradition against it; and as to traditions that deny the fact, there neither have been, nor could be, any.

It may be thought, and it is true, in general, that history has this advantage over tradition. The authors of authentic history are known; but those of tradition, whether authentic or unauthentic, are not known. The probability of facts must diminish by length of time, and can be estimated, at no time, higher

higher than the value of that original authority, from which it is derived. This advantage, then, authentic history has, which no tradition can have. The degree of assent, which we give to history, may be settled, in proportion to the number, characters, and circumstances of the original witnesses; the degrees of assent to tradition cannot be so settled. Let us see, therefore, how far this difference may be thought to affect the tradition of the beginning of the world. We shall find, I think, that we are very liable to be deceived in all these respects which should constitute the authenticity of history, and that the difference I have observed cannot affect, in any sort, the true fact I assert.

WE are deceived, grossly, very often about the number of witnesses, two ways. Sometimes by applying testimonies that have no true relation to the things testified, and sometimes by taking different repetitions of the same testimony, for different testimonies. Both these ways are employed with success, artfully by some, habitually by others; and numerous citations improperly brought, and carelessly or ignorantly set to account, to increase the confusion and to promote the deception. Nothing can be more ridiculous, perhaps, than to see a great part of what we find in profane antiquity applied to confirm what we find in sacred. Numerous and astonishing examples of this kind might be brought from all the writers who have endeavored to establish the authenticity of Jewish, by a supposed concurrence of profane, traditions. But I pass these over. It is full as ridiculous to see all the antient writers, who have spoke of the Assyrians and Persians, quoted as so many distinct witnesses, when they did, for the most part, nothing more than copy CTESIAS, first, and one another, afterwards. Neither CTESIAS, nor MOSES himself, may deserve belief in all the particulars related by them; but

but CTESIAs may be reckoned as a witness the more of some general facts, as MOSES may be of some others.

THAT the world had a beginning is a naked fact, which neither contains nor implies any thing equivocal. It neither leans on the authority of one nation, nor of one system of traditions which many nations may adopt. Nations, the most distant in place, and the most opposite in opinions, customs, and manners, concur in affirming it. All these traditions, therefore, have had different originals, or they all proceed from one original tradition. If they had different originals, the truth of the fact is established by so great a number of independent testimonies. If they all proceed from one original tradition, the truth of the fact is established just as well; since such a tradition must have been that of one first family or society. As it would be absurd to assume that a tradition, which may be called that of mankind, could be founded originally in any thing else than the truth of a fact which concerned all mankind, and of which all mankind had once had a certain assurance; so it would be absurd to suppose that a tradition, arising in one family or society alone, could spread to all the corners of the earth, and be received alike by nations even unknown to one another, unless we suppose this family or society to be that from which all these nations, by whom this tradition was preserved, proceeded. It does not seem that this argument can be eluded.

As there is a great difference between circumstantial relations and general naked facts, so there is, likewise, between the tradition I contend for, and every other of the same kind. That there has been an universal deluge is a fact, as general and as naked as this, "the world had a beginning;" but I apprehend, that the tradition of it is not supported like that of
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the commencement of the world. Has the memory of this event been preserved among all the antient nations? There are men bold enough to say so; but the contrary is true. The tradition of NOAH's deluge is vouched by no other authority than that of MOSES: for those nations, which preserved the memory of so many particular deluges, knew nothing of this universal deluge; and yet it is impossible to conceive that the memory of such a catastrophe should have been known only by one people, and that not the most antient neither; or being known to all, should have been preserved only in one corner of the earth. If this tradition then is liable to suspicion, for want of a sufficient number of testimonies, that of the commencement of the world is liable to no suspicion; because it has as many testimonies as can be expected on the supposition of it's truth. Let us proceed now to consider the veracity and probity of witnesses, and the difference between history and tradition on this head. History, to be authentic, must give us not only the means of knowing the number, but of knowing the characters, of the witnesses who vouch for it. Tradition in general gives us the means of knowing neither; and the particular tradition we speak of here, which is that of nations, not of men, does not stand in need of the latter.

THIS condition of historical probability is even more important than the number of witnesses; and it is by this that we are most liable to be deceived. There are certain follies which prevail sometimes like epidemical maladies, and infect whole nations with their delirium. Such there were, of one sort, among the Egyptians; such there were, of another sort, among the Jews; and the predestination to universal empire may pass for another, among the Romans. But whatever various effects different deliriums may produce in different countries, there is one which they produce alike in all, the spirit of inventing

venting, believing, and propagating lies. These lies come soon to have education and authority on their side. It becomes the interest of particular men, or of particular societies, to profit of the public credulity, and when they have once done so, their lies produce such effects, under the management of bold and artful men, as sober truth never could. Thus MAHOMET, to go no higher, instituted a new religion in the seventh century of ours, and founded a great empire. MAHOMET had intrepidity as well as address, and if a miserable Jew of Asia minor, seventy or eighty years ago, had not wanted the former, we might have seen, very possibly, at this hour, a new spiritual and temporal empire established by the adorers of a new Messiah. But the courage of SABATAI SEVI, to whom the Jews resorted from all parts, in a firm persuasion that he was their true Messiah, failed him, and he passes for an impostor, merely because he durst not stand an impalement. Thus not only lies, but whole systems of lies, get into history; pass for religious truths; and serve to support, by appeals to them in after-times, the original fraud. MAHOMET was obliged to fly from Mecca to Medina by the unbelieving Arabs. But the Arabs now, and all those who have been converted to mahometism, (for it would be false to say, tho' we hear it continually said, that this religion has been propagated by force alone and not by persuasion) go very devoutly in pilgrimage to the place from which he was driven, and the time of his flight is become their sacred æra.

I DWELL the longer on this point, because it is that which justifies historical pyrrhonism the most. The antient manner of recording events, made it easy to practice all these frauds. The priests in Egypt, in Judæa, and elsewhere, were intrusted to make and to keep these records; and they were under a double obligation, if I may say so, for such they thought it no

doubt, to keep them with greater regard to the system of religion, whose ministers they were, than to the truth of things. They were to keep up the credit of antient lies, and to invent as many new ones, as were necessary to propagate the same fraud. By these means, and on these motives, the whole of history was corrupted in those nations, as we shall easily believe that it could not fail to be, when we consider the connexity between civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and their mutual influence on one another. JOSEPHUS, writing against APPION, praises this manner of preserving the memory of things, in order to bespeak approbation to the practice, which was that of his own country. He boasts much of the sincerity, and even of the inspiration, if I mistake not, of the jewish scribes. But good sense, founded in experience, will answer, that they who record matters, concerning which they are strongly biased by their affections, their passions and their prejudices, and wherein they have, directly, or indirectly, an immediate and great private interest to serve by inventing falsehoods, or by disguising truth, are never to be received as good witnesses, unless their testimony be confirmed by collateral and disinterested evidence. That they are not to be received as such, on any other terms, we need go no further than the Jews themselves for examples. Some of their heroes and heroines may be thought justly, when we consider the anachronisms and the blunders they commit, as fictitious as AMADIS of Gaul, and their traditions no more authentic than those of archbishop TURPIN.

THE uncertainty of history arises principally from the causes here laid down. We are less liable to be deceived by the concurrence of authors, more independent and more indifferent than these, tho' they may not be all of equal credit: because when their motives and designs are not the same, when they

they had no common principle, and when they cannot be suspected to have had any concert together, nothing but the notoriety of facts can make their relations coincide. In such cases a nice examination of the veracity and probity of historians, when we can make it, is as little necessary as it is in matters of tradition, where we cannot make it. We may subscribe, at least as reasonably, to the united testimony of a great number of traditions, whose authors are unknown to us, as we may to facts reported by a great number of historians, tho' the authority of some of these would be otherwise very precarious.

EXPERIENCE shews sufficiently, that there is no falshood too gross to be imposed on any people civilised or barbarous, learned or ignorant, but we shall never conceive that the same lie could be imposed on all people: because it is impossible that the same lie should flatter them all alike, or be equally well proportioned to the interest and designs of a prevalent society in every nation. What immediate or necessary relation has the beginning of the world to the predominant folly of the Egyptians, for instance, or the Chinese, or to the interest of the priests, among the former, and any of the several sects, among the latter? Since they believed the world to have had a beginning; it was very conformable to the folly of these two people to insist that they descended from the first men, and were the most antient nations of the world; but what need had they to assume the commencement of it? Would they not have flattered their vanity more to say, that it was eternal, and that their race was coeternal with it?----Once more. What necessary relation had the beginning of the world to the favorite principle of the Jews, who believed themselves a people chosen by God, out of all the people of the earth? Could the eternity of the world make it less likely that they

descended from SEM, or the vocation of ABRAHAM more improbable, or destroy the credibility of any fact that flattered their vanity? I confess, I think not. If it be said, that this nation had nobler ideas of the supreme Being than any other; and that it was more conformable to these ideas to believe that the world was made by God, than that it is eternal as well as he; I might deny the first proposition, and shew that no nation had such mean ideas of the Divinity in many respects as this. But if I admitted it, for argument sake, I might ask how this philosophical opinion could be passed for a matter of fact on the Egyptians, who boasted so much of their own antiquity, by a people, who had grown up among them, and who had been so long their slaves? If this tradition of the beginning of the world had prevailed among the Jews first, who were known to few people, and despised by those that knew them, how came it to spread far and wide to the utmost extremities of the east and west?---Since I have named the west, let me mention the Peruvians, and ask how the beginning of the world can be said to have flattered the general folly of this people, or the particular interest of their incas? They thought their incas the children of the sun. To what purpose was it to make them believe that PACHA CAMAC was a being superior to the sun, and that he created the world? Would it not have been more agreeable to the prejudices of the Peruvians, and to the interests of the incas, to have supposed the world eternal, and themselves the offspring of an eternal father?

LIES, that are produced by the predominant passions of people, and by the policy of those who lead them, carry for the most part on their fronts, if I may say so, the marks of their original: and this observation will hold in a multitude of instances that may be brought from history and tradition, both from facts circumstantially related, and from those that are naked, or almost naked of circumstances. But the tradition

that affirms the beginning of the world is not in this case. It is relative no more to the particular character of one people than of another. It favors no more one general principle of religion or policy than another. In a word, force your imagination as much as you please, you will find insurmountable difficulties in your way, if you suppose the fact invented : but all these difficulties vanish when you suppose it true. The universal consent of mankind follows naturally and necessarily the truth of the fact. The antiquity of the tradition is a consequence of the antiquity of the world, and the great variety of fables, which have been invented about it, is a circumstance that accompanies every event that has descended long in oral tradition, and that has not been ascertained by cotemporary history, nay, even some that seem to have been so ascertained.

THERE remains to be spoken of, another condition of historical probability, which it may be supposed that tradition cannot have, and which we have seen, in the case of numbers, and veracity or probity of witnesses, that history itself does not always furnish, and for want of which we are often imposed upon by it. This condition is so essential, that neither the numbers nor characters of witnesses will constitute probability without it. The condition I mean is this ; that the original authors were not only cotemporary but competent witnesses. The examination whether they were such or no may be reckoned for another advantage, which history has, or must have, to be deemed authentic, over tradition, by what passes every day, under our eyes, when we see almost every public fact related, and even transmitted to posterity, not according to truth, but according to the wrong judgments which are made by prejudice or by passion. What happens now, happened formerly, and no stronger proof of it can be required than that which we find in ARRIAN. He had before him the memoirs

rials of ARISTOBULUS and of PTOLEMY, two principal captains that accompanied ALEXANDER in all his expeditions; and yet the historian was puzzled, sometimes, by the inconsistency of their relations.

ON this head, the competency of original witnesses, it may be said, that if history wants it sometimes, tradition must want it always, and that tradition, especially, which I defend. I may be told, and I was told, that if every thing else, which I have advanced, was admitted, the objection, arising from the incompetency of witnesses, would be sufficient to refute me. It was urged, that whoever were the first to say there had been a monarchy of the Assyrians, might know the truth of what they said, but that they, who were the first to affirm the beginning of the world, could not know the truth of what they said, not even on the supposition that they were the first of men. This tradition, therefore, is that of an opinion, not of fact. The existence of God is a tradition too; and theists, very often, appeal to the universality of this tradition to prove the truth of an opinion, just as you appeal to the same universality to prove a fact. Had you proved the fact, you might have drawn from it all the arguments that can be drawn to establish, in belief, the existence of a supreme Being. But you have amused yourself with nothing better than proving the truth of one opinion, by the tradition of another, which is a proceeding that cannot be justified; because we are as able, and probably more able judges of the opinion, than any of the antient nations could be witnesses of the fact. As different nations have their different follies, there are some common to all mankind. As there are fictions which favor the interests and promote the designs of those who govern in all the countries of the world, the existence of one supreme Being has been acknowledged in all ages, and if you please to say so, by all people. Superstition took hold, and policy profited

profited of this opinion, under one form or other. Superstition abounds wherever there are men, and some kind of policy wherever there are societies. Metaphysical reasonings on the nature and attributes of a supreme Being, may persuade philosophers that this Being, whom they assume to exist by the necessity of his nature, created the world, which does not seem so to exist. Naturalists, in particular, may have adopted easily an opinion which saves them much pains and useless research. A first cause of infinite wisdom and power, cuts all the gordian knots that embarrass them, and a single supposition furnishes the solution of a thousand difficulties. ---All this was urged with much vehemence, by DAMON, and he concluded, by putting this dilemma. If the opinion of the commencement of the world is conformable to the knowledge we have of things, and proportioned to the human understanding, as you assert, there results from thence no proof that the fact is true, but great reason to believe that men might assume it, without knowing any thing of the matter. On the other side, if this be not true, your universal tradition wants the first and principal foundation of probability which you have laid down.

I HAVE put these objections, such as were made, and such as might have been made to me, in their full force. They seem plausible; let us see if they are unanswerable. They will not appear so, if I can shew first, that the atheist begs the question when he assumes that, supposing the world to have had a beginning, even the first of men could not be competent witnesses, because they could not be competent judges, of the truth of the fact; secondly, if I can state so clearly, the distinction to be made between the tradition of an opinion, and the tradition of a fact, in our judgments about them, as to reduce to an absurdity the supposition, that
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the tradition we speak of, is of the first sort ; and thirdly, if I can prove, by reasons drawn from the human nature and from general experience, that unless the world had really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the opinion of all antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been established in tradition.

THE atheist begs the question, and by begging it he advances a foolish and arrogant proposition : since to be sure that the first men could not be witnesses of the beginning of the world, he must assume that he knows, very exactly, how the world we inhabit was framed, if it was framed at all. Such inconveniencies happen frequently to those who combat truth. They call temerity to their aid ; and they affirm, boldly, on precarious conjectures ; and when they have heated their own imagination, they hope, and not always in vain, to seduce those of other men. In the defence of the truth, we shall never be reduced to any such extremity. Tho' the atheist must pretend to know how the material world was made, and in what manner the human race began, in order to deny that the first men were competent judges and witnesses of both. We pretend to no such knowledge : but nothing less than such knowledge can justify his denial ; whereas the universality of the tradition justifies abundantly our affirmation. We may affirm, on the faith of all mankind, that the world began, much better than it can be affirmed, on the faith of a few precarious partial and inconsistent traditions, that there was an empire of the Assyrians.

To build a world is not so easy a thing as many a speculative architect has imagined. The author of the book of Genesis begins his history by it ; and tho' we do not set to his account the use which has been made of passages in his narrations

ration, yet it is impossible to excuse all the puerile, romantic, and absurd circumstances, which nothing could produce but the habit of dealing in trifling traditions, and a most profound ignorance. It is impossible to read, what he writ on this subject, without feeling contempt for him, as a philosopher, and horror as a divine; for he is to be considered under both these characters.

NATURAL philosophy made little progress among the Greeks and the Romans, and a system of the universe was very little known by them. The eastern nations knew it better; but among these we must not reckon that of the Jews. It has been said, that PYTHAGORAS was a disciple of the prophet EZEKIEL, or had some other Jewish masters. If this idle conjecture were true in fact, it would not be true, however, that he took from them his mundane system. PHILOLAUS, who published his doctrines, had very different notions of it from those of the Jews, and from those of the other Greeks. One would think too, that some modern astronomer had dictated the hypothesis which PLUTARCH and DIOGENES LAERTIUS attribute to CLEANTHES, the Samian. This true system, which accords so little with that of MOSES, after having been long lost, was renewed in the sixteenth century by COPERNICUS, confirmed and improved by GALILEI and KEPLER, and since demonstrated by NEWTON. How magnificent a scene of the universe have these new discoveries opened! how much more worthy of the wisdom, the power, and the immensity of God, than all the paultry confined systems of antient philosophers, and of MOSES among the rest!

Tho' we know much more than they did of the works of God, yet we know as little as they did concerning the production of them. Antiquity had other makers of worlds be-

sides MOSES. PLATO was one of those; and if his hypothesis be no more probable than that of the Jewish legislator, it is, at least, a little more reverential to the supreme Being. The same presumptuous confidence has been seen in these ages, wherein philosophers, having greater knowledge, should have had more modesty, and have been more sensible how ignorant we remain, after all the improvements we are capable of making. DES CARTES, for instance, who had much of this presumption, and employed a great deal of artifice to make his hypotheses pass for real discoveries, acknowledged a little more need of a God than STRATO avowed. He wanted a God to create matter and to impress motion on it. But when he had assumed thus much, he thought himself able to proceed without this help, and to shew, how the world was formed, or how an universe might be formed, by the laws of matter and motion. I told DAMON, that I thought this philosopher's ill success would hinder him from any enterprise of the same kind; that I should, therefore, have still a right to conclude, that he begged the question, when he asserted that it implied contradiction to suppose the first men capable of knowing that the world began; and I desired him further to consider with me, whether laying this presumption aside, we may not assume, without any, that there might have been certain marks, by which the first men must necessarily know that they were the first men, and that the system of the world began. If we find such marks, and find them probable, by their analogy to what we know, it will follow, I think, that the beginning of the world has some proof "*à posteriori*;" whereas the eternity of it can have none of this kind, any more than "*à priori*."

HOWEVER this planet of ours was formed, the first men could not possibly be spectators of the formation of it. Both men and all other animals required an earth to walk on, food

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to nourish them, and an atmosphere to breathe in, and the light of the sun to conduct them. The prior existence of the sun might be necessary too, on another account, antecedently to their creation. This great luminary might be necessary to the formation, as we know that it is to the preservation, of our planet, whether that of the moon were so or not, and whether the Arcadians were in the right or not, when they said, that they were older than this secondary planet.

BUT now, tho' there could be no human witnesses of the world arising out of a chaos, and growing into that form and order wherein we see it, yet the first men might know, very certainly, that this system of things began to exist. As it would be ridiculous to assert, like the Tuscan author, whom SUIDAS mentions but does not name, that God employed twelve thousand years in creating the universe; so is there no necessity of believing that the solar system, or even this one planet, was the work of six days. Such precipitation seems not less repugnant to that general order of nature, which God established and which he observes in her productions, than the day of rest, which MOSES supposes God to have taken, or which the Jews invented to make one of their institutions more respectable, is repugnant to all the ideas we are able to frame of the Divinity. Tho' it be conformable to our notions of wisdom, that every thing necessary to man was created, when he began to exist; yet is there nothing which obliges us to believe, that mankind began to exist in all the parts of the world at once.

WE need put our imagination to no great efforts, to believe that all this might be: and if it might be, we may suppose that it was. We do not, like reasoners "*à priori*," imagine what may have been according to our abstract reasonings, and so conclude from possibility to actuality. We proceed much more

reasonably from actuality to possibility, in a method so often, and so absurdly reversed by philosophers. A more able naturalist would succeed better in finding those marks by which the first men might know the commencement of this system. I will mention three or four, which are obvious enough, and may serve to explain a matter that seemed paradoxical, and is not, perhaps, absolutely essential to my argument.

The general opinion of all those who have reasoned about the creation or formation of the world, and that which MOSES himself follows, assumes that there was originally a chaos or confused mass of matter, wherein all the elements or first principles of things, which exist in the material system, were contained. Whether this mass was created or no, they thought it so necessary to be supposed, that they could not go on one step, in building a world, without it. As soon as it is supposed, "instant ardentis Tyrii," they all go to work. Every one separates and disposes these materials in his own way; the laws of mechanism are employed, according to the different plans of these architects, and a world is soon made. ---In one of these philosophical romances, published at the end of the last century, the ingenious author assumes that our planet was, till the deluge, in a direct situation to the sun; that is to say, that its axis was parallel to the axis of the ecliptic, or, in other words, that the ecliptic was confounded with the equator. Among several advantages which he pretends to draw from this hypothesis, the great facility of peopling the world with inhabitants is one. He thinks that animals could not have been brought forth, nor have grown up, if there had been any variety in the seasons by the obliquity of the ecliptic, and if these children of the earth, hatched, as we may say, by the sun, had been exposed, at first, to the injuries of the air, and to the cold of a winter.---Had
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this author been opposed by his own tribe alone, and in a theological way, he might have escaped pretty well; but the natural philosophers and the mathematicians rose up against him, and battered down his hypothesis. I enter not into particulars. The conclusion drawn from all their arguments was this, that the present situation being more advantageous to the earth, in general, than any other, we ought to be persuaded that it is now the same wherein God placed it originally. But I doubt very much whether this conclusion be undeniable. The supreme Being proportions always his means to his ends, and may therefore employ different means when different ends are to be attained. Let it be that the present obliquity of the ecliptic, which is of twenty-three degrees and twenty-nine minutes, may be in the present state of the world the most advantageous. Nothing hinders us from assuming, that another obliquity, or no obliquity at all, might be more advantageous when the present system of things began. If that of the chevalier de LOUVILLE be true, this obliquity was of about forty-five degrees one hundred and thirty thousand years ago. On the comparison of which two obliquities, I shall leave philosophers and mathematicians to dispute as long as they please.

WHAT it is to my purpose to observe is, that no proof will arise, from all they can say, to convince us that the present was the original situation of the world to the sun. Infinite wisdom does not change the means, as divines would sometimes make us believe that he does, at least in the œconomy of the moral system, when the ends are the same. Nay, the same means serve often to accomplish different ends. But when the ends are so different, that the means of accomplishing one imply contradiction with the means of accomplishing another, we may say, very assuredly, that Infinite Wisdom changes the means; and, therefore, if the means of preserving
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the material and animal world are different from those which were necessary to the beginning of both, the present position of the earth may very well be thought not to have been the first. If alternate corruptions and generations are become necessary, and if the former produce the latter, it could not be so from the first. The first was certainly very different from those which we observe. Corruption could not then be necessary to generation. If a greater degree of heat was so for some productions, that greater degree is to be found in BURNET's hypothesis. If less, and very different degrees were necessary, these different degrees are to be found in the same hypothesis gradually lessening from the equator, and this gradation, by which different climates are formed, might be necessary for different productions to a certain distance from that climate where the sun was always in the zenith. As there were no variations in these different climates, but each enjoyed a particular and uniform season, the animals and plants, of each, were nourished and carried to the perfection of their growth, by the same principle by which they had been produced, and in a manner suitable to their nature, and to that of their climate.

WHILST it fared thus with one part of the world, the other parts were in a very different state according to this hypothesis. But far from finding any thing here, that may seem repugnant to the wisdom of the architect, this wisdom seems more fully displayed than in the hypothesis of MOSES or of PLATO, and this order to have much more analogy with the order of nature which we see established. These different climates appear like so many different matrices or wombs, impregnated with the original seeds of things, and wherein the first productions were formed by the inconceivable energy of divine power. In other climates, more distant from the equator, where the influence of the sun, the first of second causes

causes employed in these generations, was gradually less felt, the great work of the creation might advance more slowly. In climates still more distant, this influence might become too weak to produce any considerable effects, and the great work might proceed still more slowly, or not at all. Then, perhaps, the obliquity of the ecliptic might begin, by slow degrees, without causing any disorder in the climates already inhabited. The first situation of the world to the sun having had it's effect, another situation might become necessary for two purposes, to render those climates, where the sun was always in the zenith, more temperate; to carry the generations of animals and of the fruits of the earth forward on both sides to the north and to the south; to give a greater degree of heat, where a greater was still wanted, and to give some, where there was none at all.

WE may believe, that this obliquity of the ecliptic arose much faster than the chevalier DE LOUVILLE assumed it to decrease. A minute in one hundred years is too little. Let us suppose, on the prerogative of hypotheses, a degree, and even more, if you think fit. In this manner, those parts of the world, which were excessively heated, cooled, and those which were frozen by cold, heated gradually. Thus a system of final causes became, it may be, complete, and the earth having passed thro' the positions which were, of all possible positions, the most proper to create, might stop at that which is said to be, of all others, the most proper to preserve.

IF the learned master of the Charter-house, and the able Scotch mathematician, who writ against him, were still alive, I should expect that they would think themselves under some obligation to me for having endeavored to compromise matters between them, and to unite, in one scheme, their contrary opinions. But since I cannot have this advantage, I must

must content myself with the inward satisfaction I feel, in contemplating this plausible notion, which I have advanced on grounds as good as many of those, that are not deemed paradoxical either by divines or philosophers, have been established. They are possible, no doubt; and, I presume, they will never be demonstrated false, nor any other ways of accounting for the same things, true. It is not however quite necessary to my purpose: for whatever circle our planet described, when her course round the sun began, we must be persuaded that the surface of it was warmed and cherished enough by the rays of the central sun to promote generation and vegetation, for which it was already prepared.---If the present obliquity of the ecliptic prevailed then, the torrid, the temperate, and the frozen zones, as we call them, might be capable of the various productions proper to them; or we may assume, very consistently, that countries more distant received, from those that were nearer the sun, such animals and such plants as their climates were fit to preserve, though not fit to generate.---In short, we need not apprehend the want of heat, even on the received hypothesis. The sun, much older probably than our world, and who has, certainly, grown older ever since, may have lost much of the force and efficacy which he had in those primæval days. Nay more; astronomers and natural philosophers agree, I think, about that perpetual expence, which all the suns of the universe are at, to enlighten, to warm, and nourish their several systems; of which expence, we must believe, that our sun has his share. They assume indeed, that the atmospheres of these suns compress so strongly the exhalations that rise from them, and drive them back with so much force and so much œconomy, not suffering any more than are absolutely necessary to pass, that these springs of light and heat cannot be exhausted, nor suffer any great diminution in thousands of years. But thousands of years, and God alone knows how many,

many, are elapsed since our sun was first lighted up, and he may have therefore suffered some diminution.

THESE hypothetical reasonings, and others to the same purpose, may be, I think, maintained, whether we suppose this obliquity of the ecliptic to have been decreasing or increasing : for the decrease of some minutes in a century, during a space of time, even as long as that which the Egyptians imagined, will not be found inconsistent with our hypothesis. Our hypothesis wants to assume little more than this, that nature, who acts with much simplicity and uniformity, acted much in the same manner after her first productions, in those of animals for instance ; and if this be granted, it will follow, evidently, that the first men were competent witnesses of the first propagations of the animal kind ; which would be of itself a sufficient proof that they were such of the beginning of the world.

NATURE has every where fixed certain seasons, at which all, or the greatest part of them, propagate their several species, whilst man enjoys the noble prerogative of doing the same all the year round, "*Homini maxime coitus temporibus omnibus opportunus est.*" It is ARISTOTLE who says this. But then this prerogative extends no further : and a term is fixed to man, as it is to the species of all other animals for the bearing their fruit. The philosopher, I have cited, descends into a particular account of these different terms, in the fifth book of his history of animals, and as we know that men are nine months in their mothers bellies, he assures us that the camel is twelve. These animals, then, and all those who require a longer term than that of nine months, appeared later even than the second generation of human creatures, in the ordinary manner that it has been carried on from the first genera-

tion downwards. Men were by consequence witnesses of the first propagations of animals. The same proposition will hold, if we suppose them generated faster and sooner in the course of these generations, or even primævally; for, if man, for example, was but three days, or three hours, in forming out of the earth, and in receiving the breath of life, it will follow, by a very fair analogy, that the same operations took up four days or four hours for the formation of a camel, and eight for that of an elephant.

I MIGHT expect to hear, upon this occasion, many commonplace notions advanced, to shew more time required, in the process of nature, to form this animal after the image of God, than all the others, so vastly inferior to him in figure and composition. But these persons ought to reflect, that how distant soever animal may be from animal, relatively to our notion of perfection and imperfection, there can be no difference in the distance between any of them and God, who ordered this process of nature for reasons that we do not know, but certainly without regard to that dignity of nature which we imagine. The creation of a man or of an angel, in the works of God, is not more considerable than the creation of the meanest insect, nor requires that the divine energy should be exerted in a longer and more operose process of nature.

But if it is probable that the first men might see the commencement of those species of animals, whose formation require longer time than their own, it is not impossible, neither, that they might see the commencement of those species, whose formation required a less time. We may very easily imagine, that the creation had two sorts of progression, as the world has two sorts of motion. Nature might follow such an order, as we have mentioned, in every climate; but she might follow

follow a certain general order likewise, in all climates alike. As more time was necessary for the production of one animal than another, in the same climate, so more time might be necessary to bring the same animal up to the perfection of his nature in one climate than in another. As the hare might begin to run and the sheep to feed before either man, or camel, or elephant was sufficiently formed to answer the ends of its creation; so the creation, in general, might be far advanced, or even completed, in some climates, before it was so in others. The seeds, or first principles of animal life, might have more or less force and vigor, according to the different influences of the sun, tho' they were scattered every where alike. The first men, therefore, who might see no more than the last acts, if I may say so, of this great drama in the countries where they themselves arose, might see the very first acts, wherein animals were brought on the stage, in other countries. They might be spectators at twice, and in a reversed order, of the whole piece.

CREATION finished, propagation began, and the same instinct urged the two sexes to the same act. Instinct urged them to it first; a sense of pleasure recalled them to it afterwards; and the multiplication of their species was not a motive, probably, to these conjunctions. The revolution of some months shewed them the consequences of it; and the revolution of some years shewed them, that they and their offspring were born to die. Let us put ourselves, for a moment, in the place of the first men. Could they doubt that they were such? Could they doubt that all the other animals they saw, were the first of their kinds likewise? Could they fail to transmit to their posterity this tradition, "the world had a beginning?" He who has a great mind to cavil, may say, that they did not know, by these marks, that the material

world began, they only knew, that the animal inhabitants of it began then to exist. But if the first men could not be witnesses of their own creation, they might be such of the creation of other animals, as much as of the propagation of their own, and of every other species: so that, if they knew certainly, that the animal world began, I do not see what the atheist will gain by assuming that they were ignorant of the beginning of the material world. A God was necessary for one as much as for the other, and if tradition affirmed nothing more than the first, it would serve equally well to refute the atheist, who denies the existence of any such Being. Was it necessary to discover this great truth that they should reason logically, and transmit to posterity an opinion only? But in all cases they might know, by other marks sufficient to awaken the attention of a Samojede, or to inform an Hottentot, that the whole system then began. The lives of these men were, probably, much longer than ours; and if you compare what they must have seen in their youth, with what they must have observed in their old age, you will find that the experience of their whole lives, was one continued proof to them, that they lived in the first age of the material world. Observe it in one instance. The earth, out of which they had been created, furnished what was necessary for their subsistence.

“ *per se dabat omnia tellus;*

“ *Contentique cibus nullo cogente creatis,*

“ *Arbuteos fœtus, montanaque fraga, legebant, &c.*

These were the spontaneous gifts of nature, and men had no share, at first, in the production or improvement of them. They learned, in time, to do both, to sow corn, and to make bread. Trees grew up, and as they grew, they furnished a better

better retreat to birds, and a better shade to men. An old oak became at length, to them, a new phænomenon.

IF it was not time to finish this article, I might easily shew, in a multitude of other instances, that the first men must necessarily know that they were contemporaries with the material world, and saw the beginning of a new order of things. But after wandering, in complaisance to the atheist, in the spaces of imagination, and to shew him that, altho' neither the first nor the last of men were able to discover how the world was made, yet the first might know by sufficient experience, and the last by sufficient testimony, that it had a beginning, let us return into the closer precincts of reason and finish this article, as Mr. HUYGENS finishes his conjectures about the planetary world. After speaking of the absurdities contained in the physics of DES CARTES, he adds, "*mihi magnum quid con-*" "*secuti videbimur si, quemadmodum sese habeant res quæ*" "*in naturâ existunt, intellexerimus, à quo longissimè etiam*" "*nunc absumus. Quomodo autem quæque effectæ fuerint,*" "*quodque sint esse cœperint, id nequaquam humano ingenio*" "*excogitari, aut conjecturis attingi, posse,*" this philosopher asserts with great reason. Experimental philosophy has made great progress already, in discovering to us the things and the order of nature. Where it continues to be cultivated it will continue, doubtless, to discover more, and after all, human knowledge will stop far short of human curiosity; for this goes beyond our means of knowledge, nay, even beyond the boldest conjectures we can make.

BUT now, having shewn the atheist, "*ex abundantia,*" how the first men might have certainty of knowledge concerning the beginning of the world, and were, therefore, authentic witnesses of the truth of this fact and authentic authors of the

the tradition, it is time to shew that, without entering into such considerations, we must allow this tradition to be a tradition of fact, and not of opinion. This is the second of those articles that we proposed to examine in answer to the atheist's objections.---- There must be some certain principles and some certain rule to distinguish between these two sorts of tradition, as the atheist seems to allow, when he distinguishes one from the other. Now these principles are not, I think, hard to find, and the rule that results from them, is simple and plain.

COMMON sense requires that every thing proposed to the understanding, should be accompanied with such proofs as the nature of it can furnish. He who requires more, is guilty of absurdity. He who requires less, of rashness. As the nature of the proposition decides, what proofs are exigible and what not, so the kind of proof determines the class into which the proposition is to be ranged. He, for instance, who affirms, that there is a God, advances a proposition which is an object of demonstrative knowledge alone, and a demonstration is required from him. If he makes the demonstration, we are obliged to own that we know there is a God, and the proposition becomes a judgment of nature, not merely an opinion, according to the distinction made somewhere in TULLY ; tho' demonstrations are sometimes called opinions, as opinions are often called demonstrations. If, by his fault or by ours, we have not a clear perception of the ideas or of the connection of them which form this demonstration, or if, without troubling ourselves to follow it, we receive the proposition for true on the authority of others, it is, indeed, opinion, not knowledge in us. But whether we receive it, or whether we reject it, we can neither require nor employ, with propriety, any other proofs than those which are conformable to the na-

ture of the proposition. Tradition is not one of them. It may prove that men have generally believed a God, but it cannot prove that such a Being exists. Nothing can be more trifling, therefore, than to insist, as theists are apt to do, on this proof, as if the opinion proved the fact; as if all men had been alike capable of the demonstration; or, as if the demonstration was not necessary to establish the truth of the opinion. Demonstration, indeed, is not necessary on the hypothesis, that all men have an innate idea of God. But this hypothesis has been, I think, long exploded. I do not remember, at least, to have heard it maintained by more than one archbishop, two or three ignorant monks, and as many devout ladies.

As much as I am convinced of the existence of a supreme, all-perfect Being, as seriously as I adore his majesty, bless his goodness, and resign myself cheerfully to his providence, I should be sorry to rest my conviction on the authority of any man, or of all mankind: since authority cannot be, and demonstration is, the sole proper proof in this case. Should I quote to the atheist, a SUPHIS, an AMENOPHIS, an ORUS, or any of those pretended contemplators of divinity, he would laugh at me with reason; tho' he might allow, at the same time, that these seers, who acknowledged inferior beings, beings little raised above humanity, were infinitely less absurd than those who had the front to assert, that they saw the invisible God, and conversed familiarly with him. The demonstration of his existence arises from sensitive knowledge; since it is "*à posteriori*" only that we can prove the first cause to be an intelligent cause: but he is not for that an object of sensitive knowledge. This proposition, therefore, "there is a God," which becomes a judgment of nature, an object of demonstrative knowledge to every one who can make the demonstration,

monstration, or understand it when it is made, comes down as an opinion only, in tradition, and can pass for nothing better on that authority.

Is this now the case of that proposition which affirms the beginning of the world? Reason alone can authorise the first, and when I subscribe to the truth of it, I do this without any regard to tradition. All that tradition tells me, is, that men made the same judgment four or five thousand years ago. If it told me, that they made a contrary judgment, and believed the world eternal, I should make still the same on a subject concerning which, we of this age are as competent judges as the men who lived at any time before us.---This proposition, "the world had a beginning," affirms a fact long ago past, and which can, therefore, be received for true on no other authority than that of men who lived long ago, and at, or near the time when this event happened. I consult my reason, indeed, to examine whether the fact implies contradiction, no more, and when I find that it does not, I receive it for true, on the faith of human testimony, which is the proper proof, to me, of every fact whereof I have not been, myself, a witness, and without any regard to the supposed conformity of it to the general ideas of mankind. This supposed conformity, if it be real, will add nothing to the probability of the fact, as a non-conformity will take none away. Nothing, therefore, can be more trifling than the cavil made by the atheist, when he objects that the more probable this tradition is, the more reason we have to take it for an universal tradition of opinion, not of fact. The cavil is not only trifling, but to the last degree absurd; for on this principle it will follow, that the more probable a fact is, the less reason we have to receive it, as a true fact, on historical or traditional authority. I consult my reason and my experience to discover whether the fact, I am told,
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may have happened possibly, and then I consult history and tradition to discover whether it has happened actually. But, according to DAMON's logic, the more my reason and my experience shew me the first, the more reason I have to believe that history and tradition record, in every such case, an antient opinion, not an antient fact.

BUT it is time that I should hasten to a conclusion, by shewing, in the last place, that if the world had not really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the general opinion of antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been transmitted by tradition, either as a fact, or, perhaps, as an opinion. Tho' men might, in all ages, demonstrate the existence of God, they could not demonstrate alike, in any age, the commencement of the world: and, accordingly, we see that some philosophers, who believed there was a first principle, a first intelligent cause, a supreme Being, held, at the same time, that the world was eternal, far from being induced by their theism, to believe it had a commencement. Others were, I doubt not, confirmed in the opinion that there was a God, or even led to believe it, and to seek the demonstration of it, by the proofs they had of this fact, the world had a beginning in time. It is much more probable, that the received fact gave occasion to or fortified the opinion, than that the opinion determined them to assume the fact.

THE atheist, who looks on both to be nothing more than traditional opinions, will be very indifferent which of them passes for the first. He blends them together, and attributes that of God's existence, to the superstition of mankind, and to the policy of legislators. It might seem hard to attribute that of the beginning of the world to the same principles, since it

seems to have little or no relation to them. He contents himself therefore, at least DAMON did so with me, to insist that philosophers might easily fall into an opinion, which saved them much trouble in accounting for the original of things, by the supposition of an eternal Being, infinitely wise and powerful. But the atheist would do well to consider, that this seeming solution of a difficulty implies a very real absurdity, for it implies that there were philosophers as soon as there were men. He would do well to consider, further, that when there were philosophers, those, who admitted the existence of such a Being, were not the less curious in their researches of the mechanical causes of all the phenomena. In short, he would do well to consider, that these philosophers would have cut the gordian knots of all their difficulties, by assuming the eternity of the world, much more easily than they could untie them, by assuming that a Being infinitely wise and powerful had made it. They might have said, in this case, once for all, things have been eternally as they are. To what purpose should we seek the original and essential causes of that which never began?

BUT further, if we pass over the absurdity of supposing that there were philosophers, as soon as there were men, or the improbability of this supposition, that the commencement of the world was not believed till philosophers taught it; I would still ask, and the atheist would be puzzled to tell me, how the belief of the commencement of the world could be established, not only where philosophy and science flourished; but even universally, among nations who had no communication with these, and who were, themselves, the least civilised and the most ignorant? If it be said that, uncivilised and ignorant as they were, this opinion might arise and spread among them, because it was agreeable to their general notions, and analogous
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to what daily experience shewed them, in innumerable instances, as well as to what they themselves were able to do; I must assert, on the contrary, this opinion was repugnant to the natural character of the human mind; to what we may feel in ourselves, and observe in all other men. All men are, in one respect, disciples of PROTAGORAS. Uninstructed nature teaches them, like him, that man is the measure of all things; that our sensations communicate certain knowledge; that every thing is what it appears to us to be; and that the things, which do not appear to us, are not. He who sees no inequality between two objects, affirms that they are equal, and we judge naturally of the reality of all objects by the perceptions we have of them. Antient astronomers believed the stars to be immovably fixed in a solid firmament, and never suspected them to incline to the pole, or to decline from it. The sea was thought to have no bounds, because the bounds of it were unknown, and the celestial bodies to be incorruptible, because no changes were discerned in them. Philosophers reason often, and the vulgar always, like the roses in FONTENELLE. A comparison taken from those insects, who live one day only, would have been more to his purpose; but roses were more worthy than insects to be offered to the marquis, and such a philosopher as FONTENELLE, might dispense with some want of precision in favor of his gallantry. Such as I have described it, is the natural character of the human mind. It infects all our judgments, moral as well as physical, till we learn to correct it by experience and a long course of reflection. This the uncivilised ignorant people, we speak of, could not do, and it was, therefore, agreeable to the general disposition of their minds, to believe that things had been always, such as they saw them to be.

THIS must have been universally the case, I think, in countries where the natural, unimproved character of the human mind prevailed alone. In those, which philosophy began to enlighten, some might doubt of this eternity; but some other philosophers, and the people in general, would continue to believe it. From whence can we imagine that they should derive a contrary opinion? Their experience shewed them, indeed, generation and corruption; that particular things began, and then ceased to be; but they saw, on the whole, an uniform series of the same revolutions of things; their ideas were conformable to the experience which framed them, and the eternity of the world was conformable to these ideas. Such considerations may serve to shew, what I have advanced, that the eternity of the world might have been the universal tradition, but that the commencement of it could not have been so, if it had not commenced, and men had not known that it had. On this hypothesis, all the consequences of it follow naturally. One consequence is, that, since the world and mankind began in time, the tradition of this beginning should be a little more or a little less obscurely, but universally known, and this consequence has followed. Another consequence is, that men, who believed the world to have been created, in the strict sense of the word, or that the confused matter of a chaos was reduced into a mundane system, must have believed, that this stupendous system was produced by some principle unknown to them, and superior to itself; for they could not fail to perceive, on the first notices of sense, and the first essays of reason, that the idea of an effect included necessarily, in it, the idea of a cause. This consequence followed likewise. Once more, altho' the first men could doubt no more that some cause of the world, than that the world itself, existed; yet another consequence of this great event,

event, and of the surprise, inexperience, and ignorance of mankind, must have been much doubt and uncertainty concerning the first cause; and this likewise followed. CUDWORTH has endeavored to prove, many have thought, and I incline to think, that the unity of a first intelligent cause was the original belief of mankind. But if it was so, a belief soon succeeded, that gods, coadjutors to the first, in making and governing the world, as well as inferior gods, and men, and the whole material world, proceeded from this eternal source of all existence. I need not enumerate any of those various hypotheses, that arose from such absurd notions. Many of them have continued, to this day, and are held even by christians, whom revelation as well as reason enlightens. The tradition of the fact, that the world began, and that of the opinion, that God is, have come down to us, tho' not entirely without opposition, from the most early ages. But the manner of God's being, and of his working in the creation, and government of the world, have been matters of dispute in all ages, ever since presumptuous mortals affected to descend into particulars, to know any thing at all of one, or any thing more of the other, than that he is self-existent and all-perfect, and that his will, relatively to his human creatures, is revealed to them in the constitution of their system.

To conclude. I am far from resting the proof of God's existence on the authority of this tradition, that the world began. I know that we are able to demonstrate this fundamental truth of all religion, whether it began or no. But since we cannot reject this tradition without renouncing almost all we know, and since it leads men to acknowledge a supreme Being, by a proof levelled to the meanest understanding, I think we ought to insist upon it. I am the more confirmed in thinking so, by the effect it had in the dispute
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of which I have given you some account. DAMON was embarrassed by it so much, that he had recourse at last to the wild hypothesis of DEMOCRITUS and EPICURUS, if we really know what that of the former was. This hypothesis is an abyss of absurdity. In that I left him, pitying from the bottom of my heart, for I love the man, his blindness and his obstinacy; the blindness of one who sees so clearly, and the obstinacy of one who shews so much candor, on other occasions.

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OCCASIONED BY ONE OF

Archbishop TILLOTSON'S SERMONS.

THE T. E. R.

Archibishop TILLOTSON

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OCCASIONED BY ONE OF

Archbishop TILLOTSON'S SERMONS.

I COME from reading, in BARBEYRAC'S translation of TILLOTSON'S sermons, the discourse you mentioned on a late occasion ; and the effect of it has been to confirm me in this opinion, that the thief is a much more formidable enemy to the atheist than the divine. The former takes all the real advantages against a common adversary, which the latter has it in his power to take ; but he gives none against himself, as the latter is forced to do. When the divine writes or disputes on any subject, relative to his profession, he is always embarrassed by his theological system ; whether his mind be so, or not, his tongue and his pen cannot be otherwise. A thief is under no constraint of this kind. ' He may speak the truth, such as it appears to him, when the divine, tho' it appears the same to him, must be silent. The thief may be silent, by regards of prudence, when the divine is obliged to speak, by the obligation of his profession, and to maintain what he cannot defend, as well as what he can : and thus, if

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he imposes on some, he exposes himself to the attacks of others. When the theist has demonstrated the existence of a supreme, all-perfect Being, and the moral obligations of his rational creatures, he stops, where the means of human knowledge stop, and makes no vain and presumptuous efforts to go beyond them, by the help of reason or revelation. Just so, when he has proved that the world had a beginning, on foundations of the highest probability tradition can give, he stops short likewise; because, in the nature of things, we can have no other proof of the fact. Not so the divine. His system drags him on. He attempts, most absurdly, to support, in the first case, a demonstrated truth by false arguments; and, in the second, to make tradition vouch for more than any receivable tradition does or can vouch. The Archbishop, himself, seems sensible of this in one place: for having asserted the universal assent of mankind to this great truth, that there is a God, and having ascribed the universality of this assent to the nature of the human mind, on which God has impressed an innate idea of himself, he tries to evade the absurdity by adding, “or which, that is the human mind, “is so disposed, that men may discover, by the due use of “it’s faculties, the existence of God.” He endeavors to evade the theological absurdity, which he could not maintain, but he endeavors it in vain: for it is evidently false, that the two propositions are in any sort the same. The difference between affirming that the mind of man is able, by a due use of it’s faculties, to discover the existence of God, and that the mind of man has an innate idea of this existence, which prevents and excludes the use of any mental faculties, except that of bare perception, is too obvious to be insisted upon.

DIVINES reason, sometimes, on this subject with more precaution. They slide over the doctrine of innate ideas, without maintaining, or renouncing it directly, and think it sufficient

ficient to say, that the belief of a God is founded on a certain natural proportion, which there is, between this great truth and the conceptions of the human mind. I inclined, as you know, to think in the same manner, and to believe, that the first men, at least, who knew that they were such, and who saw the material world begin, would be led, by the natural conceptions of their minds, to acknowledge a first Cause, of infinite wisdom and power, and far above all these conceptions. Thus it seemed to me, that the tradition of a fact, and of an opinion grounded on it, which are apt to be confounded, tho' they should be always distinguished, might come down together. But I confess myself obliged, on further reflection, to abandon this hypothesis. I abandon it with the less regret, because, whatever the first men might think, nay, whether the world had a beginning in time, as I am firmly persuaded it had, or not, the demonstration of God's existence will remain unshaken. But I am obliged to abandon it, because a natural and intimate proportion between the existence of God, and the universal conceptions of the human mind, may appear chimerical, and perhaps is so. It is, I doubt, chimerical, even when it is applied to the first men. The variety of the phenomena, which struck their senses, would lead the generality, most probably, to imagine a variety of causes, and more observations and deeper reflections, than the first men could make, were necessary to prove the unity of the first cause. That some made them, at least very early, can scarce be doubted. So that the orthodox belief and polytheism might grow up together, tho' the latter might spread wider and faster than the former.

IF there was really such a proportion, or such a conformity, as is assumed, particular men, philosophers here and there, might have held polytheism notwithstanding this; but the ge-

neral opinion of mankind would have been the orthodox opinion, instead of which we know that polytheism and idolatry prevailed almost every where. Polytheism and idolatry, therefore, seem more conformable to human ideas, abstracted from the first appearances of things, and better proportioned, by an analogy of human conceptions, to the uncultivated reason of mankind, and to understandings not sufficiently informed. Our archbishop supposes it objected to him, that the general consent of mankind in acknowledging one God does not prove that there is one, any more than the general consent of numberless nations in acknowledging several proves that there are several. He answers the objection by saying, that philosophers and wise men, in every nation and in every age, were of a different opinion from the vulgar, so that the heterodox opinion cannot pretend to have general consent on its side, since the opinions of the vulgar, opposed to those of philosophers and wise men, can be received into this reckoning no otherwise than like a multitude of noughts without any figure. This is strange reasoning to fall from the pen of so great a man. It is certain, that the orthodox belief maintained itself in some minds, perhaps in some nations, and pierced thro' all the darkness of ignorant ages; but yet polytheism, and the consequence of it, idolatry, were avowed and taught by legislators and by philosophers. Neither will it avail any thing to say, that these men had their inward, as well as their outward doctrine, and that they taught, in private, the contrary of what they taught in public. On this very supposition it will still follow, that polytheism and idolatry prevailed more easily, because they were more conformable to the natural conceptions of the human mind, than the belief of one first intelligent Cause, the sole creator, preserver, and governor of all things. It is absurd to say, that the consent of some wise men, and even of some nations, instructed and governed by them, in the acknowledgment of

one supreme Being, is a proof that this idea is innate in all men, or universally proportioned to the conceptions of all men, and to deny that the almost universal consent of mankind, in the acknowledgment of several gods, is a proof of the contrary.

IF you are not very well satisfied with these theological reasonings, as I think you are not, you will be no better satisfied with the manner in which our archbishop attempts to prove that the world had a beginning. The question, which is commonly put to those who maintain the eternity of it, would be trifling, as well as trite, if it did not oblige the atheist to give an answer which implies, in his mouth, the greatest absurdity, and makes him pronounce, in effect, his own condemnation. TILLOTSON takes this advantage, as I have done; but he throws it away, when he has taken it, by applying it against those who may think the world more antient than the theological æra makes it to be, tho' they do not believe it eternal. He asserts that the most antient histories were writ long after this æra, and quotes to prove it, some verses of LUCRETIVS, finely writ, but very little to the purpose, because of no authority in this case.

“ ----- Si nulla fuit genitalis origo
 “ Terrarum et cœli, semperque eterna fuere;
 “ Cur supra bellum Thebanum, et funera Trojæ,
 “ Non alias alii quoque res cecinere poetæ?”

MEN have been always fond, not only to carry the originals of their several nations as far back as they could, and to represent them, sometimes, as coæval with the world itself, but to establish their own, or the traditions which had come to them, as the most antient of all traditions. Thus the
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Roman poet employed those of Greece to prove that the world had not begun very long before the wars of Thebes and of Troy. The world had a beginning, says the Jew; for there is neither history nor tradition more antient than MOSES; and we know by his writings how, and how long ago, the world was created. If we bring a Chinese into the scene, he will assure us that the world had a beginning; because the cycles, of three-score years each, in the chronological tables of his nation, do not rise any higher than HOAM-TI, who reigned about four thousand four hundred years before our æra; that from him to XIN-NUM, the successor of FOHI, there are not more than three hundred and eighty years, and that FOHI was the first that civilised mankind. It was he, will the Chinese continue to say, who left us the adorable and hitherto incomprehensible Yekin, in the explication of which our learned men have labored these two thousand six hundred years. It was FOHI and XIN-NUM who taught men the use of the plough, who invented letters, and to whom all arts and sciences owe their original. Let a learned Mexican come forward next, and he will assure you, not only, that the world began, but that the time when it began is known; for we had but nine kings before MONTEZUMA, will this great chronologer say. TENUCH was the first of them, and the founder of our monarchy; our hieroglyphical annals rise no higher; we know nothing beyond him; this calculation is confirmed by that of our neighbors, whose traditions place the destruction of the last sun, and the beginning of this, but a little before our æra. Let a Peruvian follow the Mexican, he will assure us, that the inca MANCO-CAPAC preceded ATAHUALPA, about four hundred years; that he and his sister, COYA-MAMA-OELLA-HUACO, were sent, at that time, by their father, the sun, to civilise mankind, who could not have been long in being, since they had neither civil polity nor religion, since they knew neither how to build houses,

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spin wool or cotton to cover their nakedness, nor to till their lands. These are the traditions of the east and of the west. The former make the world more antient than those of the Jews, as they stand in the Hebrew, at least; the latter place the commencement of it about the beginning of the twelfth century of the christian æra, that is about the time of your king LOUIS LE GROS, and of our first Norman princes. Our learned Europeans may laugh, as much as they please, at these learned Americans: but they must not be offended, if they are laughed at, in their turn, by those who think, that if CADMUS, the cook of a certain king of Sidon, carried the use of letters, and his son, or his grandson, BACCHUS, the culture of the vine, to the Greeks three thousand years before MANCA-CAPAC civilised the Peruvians, it may very well be, that the Atlantic, or some other nation still more unknown to us, had made all these improvements, by a long experience, three thousand years before the Greeks, or even their masters, who boasted of a much greater antiquity, the Egyptians.

A CROWD of reflections presents itself; but these may serve to shew how ridiculous it is, whilst we receive on the faith of universal tradition this fact, "the world had a beginning," to go about to fix the æra of it according to those of any particular nations. The negative argument, "we have no memoirs beyond such a time," proves nothing but our ignorance; and the positive argument, that "we have relations of the beginning of arts and sciences in several countries;" proves nothing more than what it is very needless to prove; I mean, that there was a time, when every one of these nations began to be civilised. Neither of these arguments is of weight against the atheist who asserts the eternity of the world. But they give him an advantage, such as it is, which bad arguments give frequently in polemical writings; and having refuted these,

these, he may triumph, as if he had refuted all the rest, which is a practice very common among his adversaries the divines.

IF the divine had not more at heart to establish the credit of Jewish traditions than the commencement of the world, he would not proceed as he does. He would not neglect the universal tradition of a naked fact, such as tradition may preserve, to insist on particular traditions of a fact so complicated with circumstances, that no tradition could preserve it. — These circumstances might make the fact doubtful; the fact will never make them probable. Even that of the time, when the present system of things began, has been supported weakly, I will not, tho', I think, I might say fraudulently, by Jewish rabbins and by Christian doctors, from JULIUS AFRICANUS, and EUSEBIUS, and GEORGE the monk, down to STILLINGFLEET, whom I mention, particularly, because TILLOTSON ventures to assert, that he has proved, in his *Origines Sacræ*, the chronological traditions of the Egyptians, and the Chaldeans, to agree with those of the Bible. If he had proved this, which he has not, most certainly, he would have proved nothing more than what the Mexicans assert, that the traditions of two or three neighboring nations, all derived probably enough from one original, are conformable to one another. But it is, indeed, too bold an imposition to pretend to prove, by descending into particulars of facts and dates, any thing of this kind. Our learned antiquaries have no other materials than a certain number of broken, incoherent, and precarious traditions. These they make to cohere, for the most part, by guesses, and then drag them to a seeming conformity with the mosaical system, which they assume, all along, to be true, whilst they pretend to prove it to be so by collateral evidence. I will only add, to shew how impertinent all this admired learning ought to be deemed, that
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by little differences, in the arrangement of the same materials, and by a no greater liberty of guessing, distinct, opposite, and yet equal probabilities may be made to result from them. I affirm this the more confidently, because I tried it once, as you may remember, and we both thought that the trial succeeded very plausibly.

BUT without insisting any longer on this head ; to shew how divines weaken the short and plain proof that we have of the beginning of the world, let us grant, for argument's sake, that the most antient traditions are the mosaical, and that arts and sciences have not been invented more than four or five thousand years, or more or less as they think fit. Will they prove, even by this concession, that the world has had a beginning ? They cannot : for the atheist will object that he may have reason to think the world eternal, without being obliged to think the arts and sciences eternal likewise. He will maintain it to be indifferent, in his hypothesis, when or where they began ; since at whatever æra the divine places this beginning, an eternity must have preceded this æra. The divine, therefore, will be obliged to shew that it implies contradiction to assert that the world is from eternity, and not to assert that arts and sciences are so likewise. He will endeavor this by assuming, as TILLOTSON does, that arts and sciences are necessary to the well-being of mankind, and even to their being ; that necessity, the great mother of industry and of invention, set mankind to work as soon, and as fast, as the species began and multiplied, in some places with more, in others with less, of these, but in all with as much as their real wants required. Since you agree then, will the divine say to the atheist, that arts and sciences began about the time we have fixed, the world must have begun about the time we have fixed likewise. This reasoning is commonly employed against those atheists who assume that the world is eternal. But

without being one of their number, I venture to say that this reasoning is frivolous, and founded on a supposition which the men, who make it, must know to be false. The different æras of arts and sciences, invented in some countries, and carried into others, are so distant, even according to the received chronology, that the men who dispensed with the want of them, during such long intervals, might have dispensed with it longer, and in many cases, always. Are there not nations, at this hour, whose originals are unknown to us, who may be the Aborigines of the countries they inhabit, and who are ignorant, not only of all science, but of many arts supposed necessary; not only of letters, for instance, but of those, which serve to defend us against the inclemency of the air and the rigor of the seasons, by making cloaths and building houses sufficient for this purpose? These arts must have their place, surely, among those which TILLOTSON reckons so necessary, or, at least, so useful to mankind, that they could not fail to be invented, nor when they were invented, to be preserved. But his reasoning will not hold here neither; for if these arts were ever known to the people, to whom they are now unknown, they may be totally lost, after having been once found: nay, they may have been found, lost, and found anew, an infinite number of times, in an eternal duration. If these arts were never known to the people, to whom they are now unknown, it follows that mankind may dispense with the want of them during many ages, and therefore, always. We may easily conceive that Samojedes, Hottentots, and other nations as barbarous and ignorant as these, have always been, and will always remain, in the same state of barbarity and ignorance.

TILLOTSON was led by his prejudices, and by the examples of men, much inferior to him, in the herd of divines, into the two absurdities I have observed to you already; into that of proving the commencement of the world by the authority
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of particular traditions, which considered separately amount to no proof at all, instead of resting his proofs solely on the authority of universal tradition : and into that of confounding traditions of opinion with traditions of fact. He insists not only on traditions which concur in affirming that the world began, but on those which enter into a detail of circumstances, concerning the manner in which it began. Nay more, he joins the existence of God and the commencement of the world together, as if tradition was proper alike to prove both these truths. His proceeding is much the same with that of MAXIMUS of Tyre, whom he cites, after GROTIUS. Both he and GROTIUS might have quoted this rhetor, tho' they were far from doing so, against EUSEBIUS, who was unwilling to allow that the supreme Being was acknowledged by the heathens before christianity had enlightened the world; but the quotation of him, on this occasion, proves nothing, and serves only to shew that our divines declaim as loosely as the heathen philosopher. MAXIMUS of Tyre alledges the universal consent of mankind in one law or tradition, so I believe those words *Νομον κ̃ Λογον*, should be translated, " *legem famamque*," and not, as TILLOTSON translates them, "law and principle." Now this law and tradition, according to MAXIMUS of Tyre, declares, that there is one God, the king and father of all things, and several other Gods, the sons of the Supreme, who take their parts with him in the government of the world. MAXIMUS was a platonician, and he meant, no doubt, to give reputation to the dogmas of his sect, by assuming them all to be received in one general tradition by the Greek and the Barbarian; by those who inhabit the continent, and by those who live on the coasts of the sea; by those who have wisdom, and by those who have none. TILLOTSON was a christian, and he meant to make the dogmas of his sect, as well concerning the beginning of the world, as concerning the creator of it,

to pass for those of universal tradition. If we suppose that the first men were led, instantly, by the phenomena, and without any other demonstration, to acknowledge a supreme intelligent cause, the opinion rose from the fact, of which they were witnesses; but it was opinion still in them, tho' it became afterwards demonstrated knowledge. Now divines transpose this order, and make the creation of the world, which tradition vouches primarily, to be, as it were, a secondary tradition; that is, they make the tradition of fact to follow the opinion, instead of making the opinion to be founded on the fact. They give great advantage to the atheist, by blending all these things together, for the atheist will not, tho' the theist will, distinguish what they have confounded. He will look on all these different propositions alike, and as traditions only of different opinions.

AFTER having said, what has been here said, concerning the advantage which, I apprehend, that divines give to atheists by the absurd manner in which they employ tradition, I will observe another advantage, which the atheist may take, from some abstract reasonings that they employ to support this tradition. The theist is modest. He is content to know what God has done, and he acknowledges it, for that very reason, wise and good, right and fit to be done. But the divine is not so modest. It is not enough for him to know, that God made the world, and to fix the time when it was made, he presumes, with much theological ostentation, to explain the motives that determined the supreme Being to create the world and the inhabitants of it, men at least. The atheist objects that these motives must have been eternal, since the divine attributes, from which they are deduced, are certainly eternal, in the system of the divine; and that it is impossible, therefore, to conceive that the supreme Being should neglect doing, during an

an eternity, what it was conformable to his wisdom and goodness, and suitable to his power from all eternity to do. The divine may say, and he will say, no doubt, that whenever God, who is himself eternal, had created the world, an eternity must have preceded this creation, and that the objection, the atheist makes, would be just as strong, if he assumed that the world began six millions of years sooner, as it is when he places the æra of it according to the jewish and christian chronology. He will employ the same sort of reasoning, in this case, against the atheist, which the atheist employed against him in another; that is, in the case of the commencement of arts and sciences; he will put the atheist on proving that it implies contradiction to believe God eternal, and not to believe the eternity of the world. To this, it may be, the atheist would reply, that the contradiction in believing one and not believing the other arises, like a self-evident truth, from what the divine himself affirms, and that the evidence is too great to need any demonstration and therefore incapable of any, like many other truths of which we have an immediate intuitive perception. From hence the atheist would insist that all the motives, which the divine asserts a supreme Being had to create the world in time, are unanswerable reasons to prove it eternal; arguments for his system, in part at least, and, as far as the eternity of the world is concerned, in the whole.

A THEIST, who stood by, might, perhaps, suggest to the divine an expedient whereby to get out of the difficulty wherein he has involved himself by presuming to specify the motives which the supreme Being had to create the world in time. The theist would advise him, like a good ally, (for such he is sometimes to the divine, tho' he is never such to the atheist, as the divine is on some occasions) he would advise, I say, the divine to keep a little more precision in the use of words. Sometimes the world stands
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for the whole universe, and sometimes for our planet only. The divine must understand it, as MOSES does, and believe by consequence that the whole universe began to exist, when MOSES tells him, that the sun, our earth, the other planets, in short our solar system, began to exist: for the legislator of the Jews included no other in his idea of the universe. He would advise the divine, therefore, to distinguish better between the universe and the world; to affirm that our planet, or, at most, our solar system, began in time, which is the utmost that MOSES can be understood to have meant, and to affirm nothing of the universe, of which MOSES knew nothing, and he only knows that it is. Thus the reasons he gives, why God created the world, we inhabit, no sooner, may be a little better supported than they can be on the supposition that he created nothing before it, and was the eternal cause of no such effects, as his physical attributes enabled, and his moral attributes required him to produce. The theist might add, that, tho' we should suppose the universe to be eternal, like it's Author, the eternal effect of an eternal cause, nothing will hinder us from assuming at the same time, on the faith of tradition, as he does, or, on this and other foundations, as the divine does, that our world, and even our solar system began in time. A constant rotation from existence to non-existence or from generation to dissolution, and so back again, maintains our world and the inhabitants of it in being. Why should not such a rotation of worlds and systems of worlds maintain the universe in being?

BUT it is time to consider the historical, as we have considered the traditional proofs, which the archbishop brings of the beginning of the world. I will quote his own words, as they stand in BARBEYRAC's translation; for if I did not quote them, you would hardly believe that I make him say no more than he did

did say. He says then, " We have likewise an history of the
 " commencement of the world, the most antient and the
 " most credible that could be desired. This history is that of
 " MOSES, an author so antient that no other can stand in com-
 " petition with him, in this respect. I might add, that this
 " writer has all the characters of a divine authority, and prove
 " it by such good reasons, as would give a great weight to his
 " testimony in the minds of all those who believe a God.
 " But such arguments are not proper to be employed against
 " the atheist with whom we dispute at present. I ask no
 " more, than that the same credit may be given to MOSES,
 " as we give to every other historian. Now this cannot be
 " refused him reasonably, since he is quoted by the most an-
 " tient heathen historians, and since the antiquity of his
 " writings has never been contested by any of them, as JO-
 " SEPHUS maintains."

THIS is my text. I shall make some few remarks upon it,
 and this general remark in the first place. It has been said,
 truly enough, that the court of Rome has established many
 maxims and claims of right, by affirming them constantly
 and boldly against evident existing proofs of the contrary. The
 jewish and the christian church have proceeded by the same
 rule of policy, and the authority of the pentateuch, to say
 nothing here of the other books of the old testament, has
 been established entirely and solely on the affirmation of the
 Jews, or, at best, on seeming and equivocal proofs, such as
 JOSEPHUS brings against such evident marks of falshood as
 can be objected to no other writings, except to professed ro-
 mances, nor even always to them.

It was the pride of the Jews to believe themselves, and to
 make others believe if they could, not only that their nation

was the elect people of God, but that it was of an immense antiquity, and that they possessed the most antient of all authentic records. JOSEPHUS (who had as much of this pride about him as any Jew or Pharisee of them all, and who stuck, as little, at any absurdity, as any antient or modern rabbin) endeavored to promote these opinions among the Greeks and the Romans by his writings, tho' with very little success. TILLOTSON, like other christian doctors, had a better motive than that of mere ambition, tho' it was not quite foreign from ambition neither, to support the authority of the pentateuch. Whether JESUS CHRIST, or St. PAUL, abolished the ceremonial law of MOSES, or whether the former grafted on this law, as the latter thought fit to graft on his gospel, let us leave it to divines to decide. In all cases christianity was founded on judaism, and the new testament supposes the truth of the old. Our divines, therefore, are obliged to support the old, as well as they can, in order to support the new. The authority of these books is maintained, in some countries, by inquisitors and hangmen. In a country like ours where arguments alone can be employed, divines may be indulged in the use of all the good and the bad indifferently, that they may give up nothing; for where every part may be alike attacked, every part may be alike defended. Two cautions, however, these reverend persons would do well to observe. One to insist chiefly on the external proofs of the divine authenticity of the scriptures, and to pour forth, on that head, all their stock of Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, but to dwell very little on the internal marks of a divine character. They might silence those perhaps, on the first kind of proof, by their translations and commentaries, whom they will never convince, on the second, by fair reasoning; and might avoid a great deal of that blasphemy, which they talk on both; a circumstance, surely, that deserves some regard from them. Another caution is this,

that

that they should make war rather defensively than offensively, that they should take the only true advantage of the discretion of their adversaries, which would be to return it with discretion; for their adversaries seldom speak out, nor push the instances and arguments they bring, as far as they might be carried. Instead of which these orthodox bullies affect to triumph over men, who employ but a part of their strength; tire them with impertinent paradoxes; and provoke them by unjust reflections, and, often, by the foulest language.

AFTER this long, and, I hope, charitable remark, it is time to consider how TILLOTSON proves that we have historical, as well as traditional, evidence of the beginning of the world. This evidence is that of MOSES: and to give it the more weight, he insists on the great antiquity of the historian. This antiquity will not be disputed, perhaps, and it will be allowed that no other history of the same assumed antiquity has come down to us. But then it will be asked, what materials MOSES could have before him when he writ the book of Genesis, which is in some sort a preface to the pentateuch, or, at least, the first chapters of it, wherein he relates most circumstantially the creation of the world, and the whole progress of that great event? Divines have their answer ready. MOSES was not a cotemporary author, but he might write upon cotemporary authority. Twenty-five centuries passed indeed between the creation and him, but his materials were, notwithstanding that, extremely fresh and authentic, since they must have gone thro' very few hands, in ages when men lived so long, to come into his, whether we suppose them written or unwritten. This may be said, it has been often said, and always very weakly, to the purpose that is mentioned here; for if MOSES had taken his materials from the mouth of ADAM, himself, they would not have

been sufficient vouchers of all that he relates. ADAM might have related to him the passages of the sixth day, something even of his own creation, at least from the moment that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: but ADAM could have told him nothing that preceded this, even on the sixth day, nor, by consequence, on the other five, wherein the whole material world was created. MOSES therefore, notwithstanding his antiquity, may afford an instance in proof of the universality of the tradition, but no more. His writings afford no historical evidence.

OUR archbishop assures us, that he could have added to the antiquity of this historian certain characters of a divine authority, and have supported them by reasons which would give great weight to his testimony in the minds of all those who acknowledge the existence of God. It is pity he did not think fit to give these characters and reasons; since however improper it might have been to urge them against an atheist, who denies the existence of God, as well as the commencement of the world, they would certainly have been urged very properly against a theist, who acknowledging both, believes nothing of the divine character of MOSES. But he was too much attached to a rigorous precision, and used too much candor, in his reasoning, to mingle the atheist and the theist together in this dispute. All he desires is, what, he thinks, cannot be reasonably refused him, that we give the same credit to MOSES, as we should give to any other historian. We will consider then, in the last place, what characters of a divine authority may be found in the writings of MOSES, and, from this consideration, we shall find reason, perhaps, to be the less concerned that we have not those which TILLOTSON kept to himself on this occasion. In the mean time, let us continue to judge of MOSES, as we should

should do of any other historian, since it is all that is desired of us.

Now to constitute the authenticity of any history, these are some of the conditions necessary. It must be writ by a cotemporary author, or by one who had cotemporary materials in his hands. It must have been published among men who were able to judge of the capacity of the author, and of the authenticity of the memorials on which he writ. Nothing repugnant to the universal experience of mankind must be contained in it. The principal facts, at least, which it contains, must be confirmed by collateral testimony, that is, by the testimony of those who had no common interest of country, of religion, or of profession, to disguise or falsify the truth. That MOSES was not a cotemporary author is allowed, and that he could have no cotemporary authority, for the greatest part of what he advanced concerning the creation, is proved. Thus far then his writings have no historical authenticity. Let us see whether they have it in any of the other respects which I have mentioned. Were they published among people able to judge of them and of their author? HUETIUS, who writ an evangelical demonstration, and died a sceptic, admits, in his demonstration, that a book, to be deemed authentic, must have been received, as such, in the age which followed immediately the publication of it, and in all the ages which followed this. Has it been sufficiently proved, that the mosaical history was so received? I believe not. There was, it is said, by ABBADIE, I think, a law of MOSES, before ESDRAS, before JOSIAH, and even before DAVID, since this famous prophet and king speaks continually of the law of God, and since all the other prophets quote the most important passages of Deuteronomy. The pentateuch too must have been in their hands, since they shew, very clearly, that they had an exact knowledge of the facts

contained in Genesis, the least circumstances of which are referred to by them as circumstances that no man could be ignorant of. If MOSES writ the history contained in the book of Genesis, he writ all the other books that compose the pentateuch. ABBADIE assumes that this cannot be denied, and that MOSES must needs have been a good scribe, since it was he who recorded, in writing, the words of the covenant made at Horeb.

It would be hard to find an example of greater trifling: for when we have allowed that the authors of the Old Testament, from DAVID down to ESDRAS, speak not only of the law, but refer to many of the facts related in the pentateuch, it will not follow necessarily that the pentateuch, which we have in our hands, was published in the time of MOSES or immediately after it. Much of the history, and some of the law, perhaps, contained in the writings ascribed to MOSES, came down to those who quote them, by traditions of uncertain original, though they were all alike ascribed, by the Jews, to the same legislator. This cannot appear improbable to any one who considers, that establishments said to be made according to the law of MOSES, when the custom of reading this law once in seven years to the people was neglected, and when they had actually no body of law extant amongst them, are mentioned sometimes in the bible. This had been the case when HILKIAH found the law in the temple, which had been lost long before, and continued to be so, during the first eighteen or twenty years of good JOSIAH's reign. That the book, thus found, contained nothing but the law of MOSES, strictly so called, or than the recapitulation of it, made in Deuteronomy, not the mosaical history, we may, nay we must conclude, from the little time that the reading the book in the presence of the king, and before

fore it was sent by his order to the prophetess HULDAH, took up.

THE Jews had an oral, as well as a written law, and the former has been deemed even more important than the latter. The former however consisted of nothing more than traditions, which the rabbin JUDA HAKKODOSH, or the holy, compiled, six or seven centuries after ESDRAS had compiled the canon of the scriptures. In short, there seems to have been two collections of antient Jewish traditions made at different times; and the authors, who preceded ESDRAS, might quote those of one sort, as authentic facts and divine laws, just as well as the doctors, who preceded rabbi JUDA, quoted those of the other, as a commentary on them given by God himself on mount Sinai. It will be said, I know, that the authenticity of the pentateuch, given us by ESDRAS, is sufficiently proved, by the conformity it has, in most instances, with the pentateuch of the Samaritans, that is of the Cuthæans, a people sent from the other side of the Euphrates by SALMANASAR to inhabit the country of Samaria, which he had depopulated. This people knew nothing of the Mosaical law till ASARHADDON, the successor of SALMANASAR, sent a priest of the Jews to instruct them in it, who might carry, for aught we know, a pentateuch written in antient Hebrew characters with him. I enter into no examination of these precarious accounts, lest I should go out of my depth; neither need I to do so: for if we allow that the pentateuch was public before the time of ESDRAS, JOSIAH, or even DAVID, will it follow that it was so as early as would be necessary to answer that condition of authenticity, which we speak of here? Was there not time more than enough between MOSES and DAVID to make fabulous traditions pass for authentic history? Did it take up near so much to establish the divine authority of the alcoran among the Arabs, a people not more incapable

pable to judge of MAHOMET and his book, than we may suppose the Israelites to judge of MOSES, and his book, if he left any, whether of law alone, or of history and law both?

THE time that the Israelites passed from the Exode under MOSES, and the four centuries that they passed afterwards under their judges, may be compared, well enough, to the heroical age of the Greeks. Marvellous traditions descended from both, and their heroes were much alike. Those of the Greeks were generally bastards of some god or other, and those of the Jews were always appointed by God to defend his people, and to destroy their enemies. But AOD, one of these, was an assassin, and JEPHTHA, another, was a captain of banditti, as DAVID was, till, by the help of the priests, he obtained the crown; after which, under him, and his son SOLOMON, the government of the Israelites took a better form; arts and sciences were cultivated; and their historical age might begin. It has been urged, by those who scruple little what they say, that the four centuries, which the Israelites passed under their judges, were times of adversity and oppression, wherein they had something else to do than to invent fabulous traditions, or that if any such were invented so near the times of MOSES and JOSHUA, they must have been detected by the Israelites themselves, who would have been far from encouraging traditions so injurious to neighboring nations, of whom they had reason to stand in awe. Thus it seems that times of ignorance, barbarity, and confusion, were the most unlikely to give rise and currency to fables, and the most proper to preserve the truth of traditions, which must, for this ridiculous reason, have come down uncorrupted and unmixed. One can hardly imagine any thing so extravagant, and yet I can quote, from ABBADIE, a way of reasoning that is more so. You have thought, I doubt not, hitherto,

hitherto, like other men of sense, that the consistency of a narration is one mark of it's truth ; but this great divine will teach you, that the inconsistency, not the consistency, is such a mark. MOSES, he says, is so inconsistent with himself, that he establishes the existence of one God, and then talks as if there were many. He introduces JACOB wrestling against God, and the mortal comes off victorious. Could he have advanced such an apparent absurdity, if the fact had not been true ? He advanced it, because he knew it to be true, tho' he did not understand it. Just so he talked of several lords, who appeared to ABRAHAM under the forms of angels, without knowing what he said, tho' ABBADIE knew that the angel of the covenant was one of them : by which I profess myself not to know what ABBADIE meant, or what they mean, who say, that this angel was the son of God. Thus a new rule is added to the canon of criticism by this learned divine.

ANOTHER condition of the authenticity of any human history, and such alone we are to consider in this place, is, that it contain nothing repugnant to the experience of mankind. Things repugnant to this experience are to be found in many, that pass however for authentic ; in that of LIVY, for instance : but then these incredible anecdotes stand by themselves, as it were, and the history may go on without them. But this is not the case of the pentateuch, nor of the other books of the Old Testament. Incredible anecdotes are not mentioned seldom and occasionally in them. The whole history is founded on such, it consists of little else, and if it were not an history of them, it would be an history of nothing. These books become familiar to us before we have any experience of our own. The strange stories they relate, represented in pictures or in prints, are the amusements of our infancy ; we read them, as soon as we learn to read, and they make
their

their impressions on us, like the tales of our nurses. The latter are soon effaced, tho' sometimes, with difficulty; because no one takes care to preserve them, and care is taken, in a good education, to destroy them. But the others are industriously renewed, and the most superstitious credulity grows up along with us. We may laugh at Don QUIXOTE, as long as we please, for reading romances till he believed them to be true histories, and for quoting archbishop TURPIN with great solemnity; but when we speak of the pentateuch, as of an authentic history, and quote MOSES, as solemnly as he did TURPIN, are we much less mad than he was? When I sit down to read this history with the same indifference as I should read any other, for so it ought to be read, to comply with all that archbishop TILLOTSON requires of us, I am ready to think myself transported into a sort of fairy-land, where every thing is done by magic and enchantment; where a system of nature, very different from ours, prevails; and all I meet with is repugnant to my experience, and to the clearest and most distinct ideas I have. Two or three incredible anecdotes, in a decade of LIVY, are easily passed over; I reject them, and I return, with my author, into the known course of human affairs, where I find many things extraordinary, but none incredible. I cannot do this in reading the history of the Old Testament. It is founded in incredibility. Almost every event contained in it is incredible in its causes or consequences, and I must accept or reject the whole, as I said just now. I can do no otherwise, if I act like an indifferent judge, and if I give no more credit to MOSES than to any other historian. But I need say no more on this head. No one, except here and there a divine, will presume to say, that the histories of the Old Testament are conformable to the experience of mankind and to the natural course of things. I except here and there a divine, because I remember one, who speaking of the conversation of the serpent with

with the first woman, and the other circumstances of the fall of man, (that he may avoid the explanations given by the rabbins of this story, or that of PHILO, a little less extravagant than the others, all which turned the whole into allegory) has the front to assert, that there is nothing incredible in this relation, literally understood.

THE next condition of historical authenticity is this, that the facts, the principal facts at least, be confirmed by collateral testimony. By collateral testimony I mean the testimony of those, who had no common interest of country, of religion, or of profession, to disguise or falsify the truth, as I expressed myself above. Thus too it is necessary that we express ourselves in order to prevent a common theological sophism. HUETIUS says, in the place to which I have referred already, that an history is deemed to be true, when other histories relate the same facts, and in the same manner. But it is not enough that the same facts are related, even in cotemporary, or nearly cotemporary books; since if the authors of these books were such as I describe, all these testimonies would be in effect but one, as all those of the Old Testament, which confirm the mosaical history, are in truth but one, the testimony of MOSES himself.

JOSEPHUS attempts to support this history by collateral testimonies, those of Egyptians, Phœnicians, Chaldæans, and even Greeks. But these testimonies, were they never so full to his purpose, would cease to be collateral testimonies, by coming thro' him who had a common interest of country and religion to disguise and to falsify truth. If we examine the use he makes of the fragments he cites from MAETHO, concerning the shepherd-kings, and many other citations in his works, we shall find abundant reason to suspect him of both. EUSEBIUS is a collateral witness, as little a he, and

yet from these two quivers principally have all the arrows employed to defend the authenticity of the Old Testament, been drawn. They are blunt indeed, and nothing can be more trifling than the use that has been made of them by antient and modern scholars. Whenever these men find, in profane history or tradition, the least circumstance that has any seeming relation to sacred history, they produce it as collateral testimony, and sometimes even the similitude of sounds is employed for the same purpose; with a great apparatus of learning. But nothing can be more impertinent than this learning. The man who gives the least credit to the mosaic history for instance, will agree, very readily, that these five books contain traditions of a very great antiquity, some of which were preserved and propagated by other nations, as well as by the Israelites, and by other historians, as well as by MOSES. Many of them may be true too; but, I think, they will not serve to vouch for one another in the manner they must do to become such collateral testimonies as are required. That the Israelites had a leader and legislator called MOSES, is proved by the consent of foreign, whom I call collateral, witnesses. Be it so. But surely it will not follow, that this man conversed with the supreme Being face to face, which these collateral witnesses do not affirm. The Israelites were an egyptian colony and conquered Palestine. Be it so. It will not follow, that the red-sea opened a passage to them, and drowned the Egyptians who pursued them. It will not follow, that the possession of the land of Canaan was promised to their father ABRAHAM four hundred years before, as a consequence of the vocation of this patriarch, and of an alliance which God made with him and with his family. A great number of instances might be brought of the same kind; and such instances might serve to prove the authenticity of those histories, which the monk of Viterbo endeavored to impose on the world under the names of MEGASTHENES and other

other antient writers, just as well as they serve to prove the authenticity of those which we ascribe to MOSES, or JOSHUA, or any other supposed writers of the Old Testament.

THE three or four antient neighboring nations, of whom we have some knowledge, seemed to have had a common fund of traditions, which they varied according to their different systems of religion, philosophy, and policy. We may observe this, if we compare the traditions of the Arabs, descended from the Ismaelites, with those of the Jews, descended from the Israelites. Human tradition for human tradition, the former deserve as much credit as the latter. Why then do we put so great a difference between them? Have we any reason for it, except the affirmation of one of the parties? ABBADIE will tell you that we have, because the Jews were a people of sages and philosophers. The best excuse, that can be made for the poor man, is to say, that he became, soon afterwards, mad enough to study the apocalypse, and to believe that he found an hidden sense in it. The truth is, that ignorance and superstition, pride, injustice, and barbarity were the peculiar characteristics of this people of sages and philosophers. The principles of their religion formed them to every part of this character. Their priests, who had the care of their religion and the keeping of their records, as we are told, maintained them in it; and whether their history was such, as we see it, before the days of ESDRAS and NEHEMIAS, or nothing more than broken traditions, collected and put together by them in the present form, thus much is certain, that the same spirit breathes thro' the whole, and that the character of the nation appears evidently in every part of the composition. It has been said, I know, of the pride of this people particularly, that their scriptures were not contrived to flatter them in it, since their revolts, their apostacies, and the punishments

which followed them, as well as the discourses of their prophets, filled with the most mortifying reproaches, and the most terrible threatenings on the part of God, are set forth in these books with every aggravating circumstance. But this evasion will strengthen, instead of weakening, what I have said. It is true that the Jews are often represented in them like rebellious children, but they are always represented like favorite children. They abandon God's law and his worship; they depose him; they choose another king in his place; still his predilection for this chosen people subsists, and if he punishes, it is only, like an indulgent parent, to reclaim them, and to shew them the same favor as before. In short, he renews all his promises to them; future glory and triumph; a Messiah; a kingdom that shall destroy all others, and last eternally, "*consumet universa regna et ipsum stabit in eternum.*" Thus was the pride of this people kept up by incredible stories about the past, and incredible prophecies about the future; and with their pride, even to this day, their ignorance, their enthusiastical superstition, and in principle, if not in effect for want of power, their injustice and their barbarity. Thus we see that the authenticity of the mosaical history and the other histories of the Old Testament has no sufficient collateral testimony, but rests, solely, or principally, on the good faith of a people who deserve, on many accounts, to be trusted the least; and of whom we may say, that it is improbable their history should have been written, and impossible that it should have been preserved, with a strict regard to truth.

I MIGHT rest the matter here, if it did not come into my thoughts to expose a sophism that has been employed by those who defend the authenticity of this history. If they cannot shew that it is confirmed by collateral and foreign testimony, cotemporary or nearly cotemporary, they hope to confirm it by assuming that relics continued long among the Jews, and
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that festivals and ceremonious institutions continue still, all which are so many cotemporary proofs ; since they must have been cotemporary, in their origin, with the facts to which they are relative. The proof is precarious, in the mouth of one of your divines, who have abused it to establish so many pious frauds, and the belief of so many foolish legends ; but it becomes contemptible, when it is employed by one of our divines, who declaim so much against the use that has been made of it in your church. With what face can he talk to us, like ABBADIE, of the rod of AARON, of the pot of manna, or of the figures that represented rats and the privy parts of the Philistines ? Would the man prove his sincerity to us, as he proves that of MOSES, by his contradictions and inconsistencies ?

THE relics, so long preserved, exist no where out of the books whose historical authenticity they are advanced to prove, and if they did exist, we should be obliged to reject them, or to admit many of the grossest impositions that have passed on popular credulity. Did not the priests of Delphi shew the very stone that SATURN swallowed, when he intended to devour JUPITER ? Was there not an olive tree at Troezena or somewhere in Greece, in the time of PAUSANIAS, which blossomed and bore fruit, which had been the club of HERCULES, and which this hero had planted, just as JOSEPH of Arimathea planted his stick, that became a miraculous thorn at Glastonbury ?---The institution of festivals and ceremonies proves as little as relics. Tho' supposed cotemporary, they may owe their original to some fabulous traditions ; or if really cotemporary, they serve as well to prove all the ridiculous circumstances, that have been blended with the tradition, in process of time, as the fact which they were designed to record. The Israelites had their sabbath of days, their sabbath of years, and their weeks of years. Will it follow that God was employed

fix days in the laborious work of the creation, and that he rested the seventh? The passover and other institutions served to commemorate the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, and their transmigration into Palestine. But will they serve likewise to commemorate all the incredible circumstances which had been added to the tradition of a very credible, and, no doubt, of a very true event? Collateral testimony proves the event; but these supposed cotemporary institutions cannot stand in lieu of collateral testimony to prove the circumstances. Whether the event be true, or whether it be false, such institutions will confound the truth of the event with the falsehood of the circumstances in one case, and will vouch for both alike, in the other. The death of MOSES, who certainly died, is confounded with the circumstances that accompany it in the last chapter of Deuteronomy; circumstances absurd and profane; and yet, if the Jews commemorate the true fact, they must commemorate, on this principle, all the circumstances that are related in the bible, and in their oral traditions. A good iman believes piously the ascension of MAHOMET, on the faith of his traditions, and of the ceremony, by which it is annually commemorated. The ascension and the circumstances of it are false alike, the ceremony vouches for all alike; and he must believe, not only the ascension of MAHOMET, but that the angel GABRIEL brought, by night, to his sepulchre a flying horse, called Borak, which the prophet mounted and rode on horseback into heaven. Shall the annual ceremony, which confirms the whole account alike, make us believe that MAHOMET went to heaven, or hinder us from placing this story in the same class with that of ASTOLPHUS and his hypogryphe? We shall believe no part of it; but the good iman is obliged to believe the whole.

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THE little I have said makes it plain enough, and more particulars in so plain a case would be superfluous, that if we take TILLOTSON at his word, if we give only the same credit to MOSES, which we give to every other historian, and no more, his history cannot pass, according to any rule of good sense or true criticism for authentic. But other divines are not so generous; they give up nothing; and, therefore, when they cannot maintain weak arguments of one kind, they have recourse to another hypothesis, and affirm this history to have been writ by men under the immediate influence of divine inspiration, and to be, therefore, of divine authority. For this they have the word of JOSEPHUS, and the unanimous attestation of the jewish and christian churches. But all this will not amount to proof, unless it may be said, that they who cannot give to this history even the appearance of human, can give it the appearance of divine authenticity. That sameness of spirit, which runs thro' all this history, and which appears in all the writings of the jewish prophets, confirms one thing that JOSEPHUS says. A distinct order of men, priests and prophets, among the Jews, as well as the Egyptians, published the sacred writings of these people, and these writings were received on the faith of this order of men, who had the same temptations to impose, and the same opportunities of imposing, in both countries. JOSEPHUS boasts of the integrity of these men, and the strict regard which they paid to truth, in Egypt, as well as in Palestine, and his testimony will be of as much weight in favor of one, as in favor of the other, that is of none at all. The sacred writings of the Egyptians had no more authority out of Egypt than the polytheism, superstition, and idolatry of other nations gave them; and the sacred writings of the Jews were never received as such, out of Judæa, till the propagation of christianity carried them abroad. Christi-

anity abrogated the law, and confirmed the history of MOSES, from the time, at least, when St. PAUL undertook, like a true cabalistical architect, with the help of type and figure, to raise a new system of religion on the old foundations.

No proof of this kind, therefore, affording pretence to say, that the scriptures of the Israelites, any more than those of the Egyptians, are of divine authority; our divines turn themselves to declaim on certain undoubted marks of it, which are to be found, they assume, in the books themselves that the canon of the Old Testament contains. Let us say something on this subject. It deserves our utmost attention. Let us compare some of these supposed marks of a divine original with those of an human original, which will stare us in the face, and point out, plainly, the fraud and the imposture. I use these words with great freedom. I think myself obliged, in conscience, to do so, and before I conclude, you shall judge of the reasons for which I think in this manner and hold this language.

WE are told, in some theological declamations, that the revelation made to the Israelites and taught in their scriptures, corrected the false ideas of paganism, as it appears by the examples of SOCRATES and PLATO, who borrowed, from the writings of the Jews, the best and foundest parts of their philosophy, which has been proved over and over by learned antiquaries*. It is a sufficient answer to this, to say, that the fact is false. Christians, as well as Jews, have asserted it; but it is false to say, that they have proved it. Neither PLATO, nor SOCRATES, nor PYTHAGORAS, nor the Egyptians and Chaldæans, their masters, appear to have borrowed any thing from the Jews, tho' MOSES had been instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and tho' the Jews, both before and after ESDRAS, borrowed evidently,

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* Vide ABBADIE.

they were preaching, and to apply it to the whole tribe. They would do well to think a little better beforehand, and to respect their readers a little more.

WHEN these men talk of the characters of a divine original, which are to be found in the books of the Old Testament, they must mean nothing, or they must mean to say, that these books are more perfect, according to our ideas of human perfection, whether we consider them as books of law or of history, than any other writings that are avowedly human. Now if this be what they mean, nothing can be more false. They cannot deny that pagan philosophers enjoined a general benevolence, a benevolence not confined to any particular society of men, but extended to the great commonwealth of mankind, as a first principle of the law of our nature. The law of the Jews exacted from them all the duties necessary to maintain peace and good order among themselves, and if this be a mark of divinity, the laws, which rapparees and banditti establish in their societies, have the same. But the first principles, and the whole tenor of the Jewish laws, took them out of all moral obligations to the rest of mankind, and if MOSES did not order them to have no benevolence for any, who were not Jews, "*erga nullum hominem benevolos esse*," as LYSIMACHUS pretended, yet is it certain, that their law, their history, and their prophecies, determined them to think themselves a chosen race, distinct from the rest of mankind in the order of God's providence, and that they were far from owing to other men, what other men owed to them and to one another. This produced a legal injustice and cruelty in their whole conduct, and there is no part of their history wherein we shall not find examples of both, authorised by their law, and pressed upon them by their priests and their prophets.

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IN the systems of pagan philosophy we are exhorted, says another of these declaimers, to love virtue for her own sake ; but the Jewish divines, rising much higher, exhorted us to love virtue for the sake of God. But can there be any thing so impiously interested and craving, as the sentiments ascribed to the patriarchs by MOSES, and the principles of his own law ? “ If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that “ I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, “ so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then “ shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set “ for a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that thou shalt “ give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”* This was JACOB’S vow, and the conditional engagement which he took with God. If we turn to the xxviiiith chapter of Deuteronomy, we shall find that MOSES, on the renewal of the covenant between God and the people, employs no arguments, to induce the latter to a strict observation of it, of an higher nature than promises of immediate good, and threatenings of immediate evil. They are exhorted to keep the law ; not for the sake of the law, not for the sake of God, but for considerations of another kind, and wherein not only their wants were to be supplied, but all their appetites and passions to be gratified. If they hearkened diligently to the voice of the Lord, they were to be set on high above all the nations of the earth ; they were to be the head, and not the tail ; to be above only, and not beneath ; all the people of the earth were to fear them ; all their enemies were to be smitten before their face, and they who came out against them one way, were to fly before them seven. These were objects of ambition. Their basket and their store were to be blessed, they were to grow rich, they were to lend to many nations, and to borrow from none. These were objects of
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* Gen. vi. 28.

avarice. They were to be blessed every where, in the city and in the field, in the fruit of their bodies, in the fruit of their ground, and in the fruit of their cattle, and of their flocks of sheep. These were objects of all their other appetites and passions. God purchased, as it were, the obedience of a people, he had chosen long before, by this mercenary bargain. It was ill kept on their part ; and the law, with all these sanctions, was continually violated, sometimes rejected, and had in no degree a force sufficient to maintain itself in observation and reverence.

THE most excellent constitutions of human government and systems of human law become often useless, and even hurtful, either in a natural course of things, or by extraordinary conjunctures, which the wisdom of legislators could not foresee. One of the most conceivable perfections of a law is, that it be made with such a foresight of all possible accidents, and with such provisions for the due execution of it, in all cases, that the law may be effectual to govern and direct these accidents, instead of lying at the mercy of them. Such a law would produce its effect, by a certain moral necessity resulting from itself, and not by the help of any particular conjuncture. We are able to form some general notions of laws thus perfect ; but to make them is above humanity. Another of the most conceivable perfections of a law consists in the clearness and precision of its terms, and, even in this, the greatest legislators have often failed. The terms become equivocal or obscure, if they were not so originally, by the endeavors of those who fear the law, to elude it, and of those who get by their explanations or judgments, to perplex the meaning of it. But that which is ideal perfection not real among men, will be found, no doubt, and ought to be expected, when God is the legislator. If it is not

so found, all that can be said about marks of divinity in any law, that pretends to be revealed and enacted by God, is mere cant.

To apply these reflections the more strongly, it will be proper to consider the law of MOSES, relatively to the first of the perfections mentioned, as a law given to the Israelites alone, and to consider, relatively to the second, the whole body of their law, and their history, which is a sort of commentary on their law, not only as given to them, but as given to all mankind, for purposes the most important to their common welfare. If eternal Wisdom dictated the laws and inspired these historians and prophets; in all their writings, eternal Wisdom knew all the uses they were to serve in time; and by consequence, whether we regard the Jewish œconomy alone, or that of Judaism and Christianity together, the whole system of law, history, and prophecy, must be exactly proportioned, as the means to all these ends.

ON the first head we cannot read the Bible without being convinced, that no law ever operated so weak and so uncertain an effect, as the law of MOSES did. Far from prevailing against accidents and conjunctures, the least was sufficient to interrupt the course and to defeat the designs of it; to make that people not only neglect the law, but cease to acknowledge the legislator. To prevent this, was the first of these designs, and if the second was, as it was no doubt, and as it is the design or pretence of all laws, to secure the happiness of the people, this design was defeated, as fully as the other; for the whole history of this people is one continued series of infractions of the law and of national calamities. So that this law, considered as the particular law of this nation, has proved more ineffectual than any other law, perhaps, that can be quoted. If this be ascribed to the hardness of heart and
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obstinacy of the people, in order to save the honor of the law, this honor will be little saved, and it's divinity ill maintained. This excuse might be admitted in the case of any human law; but we speak here of a law supposed to be dictated by divine wisdom, which ought, and which would have been able, if it had been such, to keep in a state of submission to it, and of national prosperity, even a people rebellious and obstinate enough to break thro' any other. If it be said, that the law became ineffectual by the fault of those who governed the people, their judges and their kings, let it be remembered that these judges and kings were of God's appointment, for the most part at least; that he himself is said to have been their king, during several ages; that his presence remained amongst them; even after they had deposed him; and that the high-priest consulted him, on any emergency, by the Urim and Thummim. Occasional miracles were wrought to enforce the law, but this was a standing miracle that might serve both to explain and enforce it, by the wisdom and authority of the legislator, as often as immediate recourse to him was necessary. Can it be denied, that the most imperfect system of human laws would have been rendered effectual by such means as these?

It may not be amiss here to compare the effect of this law, before the captivity of Babylon, with that which it had afterwards.---Ten tribes of this chosen people had been, for their disobedience, dispersed, and, we may say, lost in the east, long before the reign of NEBUCHODONOSOR. This prince completed the ruin of the whole nation. He burned their temple, and their city, and carried the two remaining tribes into captivity. This captivity is said to have lasted but seventy years, and the Jews had carried into it so little respect for their law, so little regard to their history, and so little trust in the pro-

prophecies, which had been published both before and during this time, that they seemed to have forgot them all when CYRUS gave them permission to return to their country, and to rebuild their temple. He did more than give them permission; he gave them encouragement, and, among other instances of it, he restored the sacred vessels, which had been taken from them. What happened on this great revolution? ZOROBABEL gathered, with much trouble, a small number of the Jews, who were willing to return into their own country on this great revolution, and even these were the dregs of the people. The most considerable of them, and, among these, twenty of the four and twenty orders of priests that had been carried to Babylon, chose rather to stay there than to return to the holy city, tho' that was the place appointed by God for their sacrifices, and the most august ceremonies of their religion. Fourscore years intervened between the return of ZOROBABEL and the arrival of ESDRAS at Jerusalem. The temple and the city, probably, had been rebuilt, but the law cannot be said to have been restored. Many things, directly contrary to it, were practised openly and without scruple. Thus, for example, not only the people, but the Levites and the priests, married strange women, women who were not of their own country. ESDRAS, and NEHEMIAS after him, neglected nothing to restore and preserve the observation of the law, and for this purpose they took means very different from those which MOSES had instituted, and much more effectual. One of these means, and perhaps the most effectual, was the institution of synagogues, which became so numerous, that wherever there were ten Jews, it is said, there was a synagogue. In these the law was read and explained once every week; whereas it was to be read but once in seven years, and the people were obliged to go up to Jerusalem to hear it, according to the mosaic institution. The consequence was, that,
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notwithstanding some schisms, some apostacies, and other revolutions, which happened in the church and state, the Jews, in general, signalised themselves by a greater and more constant attachment to their religion and law.

ANOTHER perfection of law consists in the clearness and precision of the terms ; and, in these respects, we propose to consider this body of history, of prophecy, and of law, relatively not to the Jews alone, but to the rest of the world likewise. Now the language in which this law was given, and in which we must suppose that the histories and prophecies were written, as well as the law, unless we suppose these to have been written in, or after the time of ESDRAS, is, the learned say, of all languages the most loose and equivocal ; and the style and manner of writing of the sacred authors, whoever they were, or whenever they lived, increase the uncertainty and obscurity even of any other language. How should it be otherwise, when the same passages may be taken in historical, mystical, literal, and allegorical, senses, and when those who writ them, knew so little what they writ, that they foretold some future, when they imagined they were relating some past, event ? Lord BACON, indeed, says, that the sacred authors had a special privilege of recording the future, as well as the past, in history. But I suppose his lordship to have been no more in earnest when he said this, than he was in writing his christian paradoxes. To supply these defects, the Jews have recourse to an oral law, and christians to the decisions of councils. Strange methods indeed ! history may explain or controul tradition, but it is quite absurd to explain or controul history, by tradition. Councils were composed of men, whose pretensions to inspiration deserve nothing but our contempt, and, therefore, it is equally absurd to explain or controul the word of God, by the judgment of these

these men, whether in their assemblies, or separately. St. JEROM complains, in one of his letters *, that they dragged the text to favor their particular sentiments, how repugnant soever to it. But this text does not seem to want so much dragging. The ambiguity of it makes it supple enough, and sentiments, the most contrary to one another, are equally well supported by it. If we add to these considerations that of the infinite number of copies, of versions, and of versions of versions, which have given occasion to many alterations and interpolations, that are to be found, without going to SPINOZA, to HOBBS, or to the fanciful author of the pre-adamitical system, we must be, I think, convinced, that the Bible, which we call the word of God, is as little fit, by the manner in which it has been preserved, to be an uniform foundation of universal religion, as by the manner in which it was writ and first published to the world.

DIVINES have their answer ready, and I hear, methinks, a great bishop of your church ask me, with that air of superiority, to which no man of his age had a better claim, whether the authenticity of these books diminishes, because some explanatory additions may have been inserted, because some errors may have slipped by accident into the text, or because the mistakes of copyists have given occasion to various readings? Shew me, says the right reverend person, if you can, any law, any doctrine, any ceremony, any miracle, or any prophecy, that has been added! Are not all the writings of the profane authors, whom you deem authentic, come down to you in the same manner as those of the holy penmen? I reply, my objection and my complaint are, that the manner in which these books were writ, were published, and have been preserved, make it impossible to do this. Could we do it, could

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* Ad PAUL.

we distinguish between what is original and what not, the objection would vanish and the complaint cease. But both will remain in force till then ; because of the vast difference that there is between the importance of these and of all other writings. The laws of PLATO, the odes of HORACE, and the history of LIVY, may have been corrupted without any ill consequence to those who read them. But the same cannot be said of the laws of MOSES, of the psalms of DAVID, and of the history of the Old Testament.

I HAVE been long enough on the defensive. It is time I should attack in my turn, and shew you for what reasons I cannot believe that the pentateuch, and the other books of the Old Testament, were writ under a divine influence, and have any right to be called the word of God. There may be some defects in human laws, some falsities or mistakes in human histories, and yet both of them may deserve all the respect and all the credit, on the whole, that the writings of fallible men can deserve. But any one defect, any one falsity, or mistake, is sufficient to shew the fraud and imposture of writings that pretend to contain the infallible word of God. Now there are gross defects, and palpable falsehoods, in almost every page of the scriptures, and the whole tenor of them is such as no man, who acknowledges a supreme, all-perfect Being, can believe it to be his word. This I must prove ; and when I have done so, divines may call me theist, or atheist, if they please. I shall not be ashamed of the first character, and shall leave them to purge themselves of one as absurd as the last.---That the Jews held the unity of God is true, and that their father ABRAHAM might have learned this doctrine among the Egyptians, tho' it has been said, very foolishly, that he acquired great wealth by instructing that people in philosophy and the other sciences, is true likewise ;

wife ; but it will not follow that he, or his posterity, adored the true God. There are many passages in Job, in Isaiah, in the Psalms, and in other parts of the Old Testament, which give most sublime ideas of the majesty of the supreme Being, and which have been founded, for that reason, very high. But it will not be hard to quote Mahometan, and even Pagan writers, who have spoke of him with as much nobleness of style, and with as much dignity, as any of these ; whilst, on the other hand, it will be easy to quote many things, imputed to the supreme Being by these, at least as unworthy of him, as any which the Mahometans, or even the most extravagant of the Pagans, invented. Sublime expressions, concerning the Deity, may serve to shew, that the imaginations of those who used them, were heated by the enthusiasm of poetry and devotion ; they will not prove the writers to have been divinely inspired ; and it will become nothing less than blasphemy to assert that they were so, when they impute, at the same time, such things to the Divinity as would bring disgrace on humanity.

I KNOW, for I can demonstrate by connecting the clearest and most distinct of my real ideas, that there is a God, a first intelligent Cause of all things, whose infinite wisdom and power appear evidently in all his works, and to whom, therefore, I ascribe, most rationally, every other perfection, whether conceivable or not conceivable by me. A book is put into my hands, which is, I am told, and have been told from my youth, the word of this God, and wherein I shall find the whole scheme of things which he has established, and the whole œconomy of his providence. What I learned before by rote, I consider with more attention, and am far from finding in it the supreme Being, whose existence and attributes I demonstrate. The scene opens, indeed, by the

creation, and this creation is ascribed to one God ; that of the material world, at least : for when this God proceeds to the creation of man, he calls on other Beings, we know not by the text how many, to co-operate with him, and to make man in his and their likeness. This seems to lay a foundation for polytheism, and I am startled at it, because it is inconsistent with that unity of the Godhead which my reason shews me, and which the general tenor even of the mosaic law and history asserts. The divine, on the contrary, triumphs in the passage ; because he drags it, against reason and this revelation both, to signify the three co-equal Persons in one Godhead, which no reason can comprehend, which no revelation affirms explicitly, and which has no foundation, except that of a theology much more modern than this.

THE more I compare what MOSES says of this God, and by a supposed inspiration from him, the more repugnant I find the whole to be demonstrated, and even to obvious truth. Nothing can better resemble modern rabinical traditions, than these antient and mosaical traditions : the same ignorance of nature, physical and moral, the same irreverent conceptions of the supreme Being prevails in both. MOSES, they say, was divinely inspired, and yet MOSES was as ignorant of the true system of the universe, as any of the people of his age. I need not descend into particulars to shew this ignorance. To evade the objection drawn from it, we are told that he conformed himself to that of the people. He did not write to instruct the Israelites in natural philosophy, but to imprint strongly on their minds a belief of one God, the Creator of all things. Was it necessary to that purpose that he should explain to them the Copernican system ? No, most certainly. But it was not necessary to this purpose, neither, that he should give them an absurd account, since he thought fit to give

give them one, of the creation of our physical, and we may say, of our moral system. It was not necessary he should tell them, for instance, that light was created, and the distinction of night and day, of evening and morning, were made before the sun, the moon, and the stars, which were "set in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night, and to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years." It was not necessary that he should tell them, how this moral system was destroyed, by the wiles of a serpent, and by the eating of an apple, almost as soon as it began, against the intention, as well as command, of the Creator. Besides, MOSES must be considered as appointed, and inspired by God, to write, not only for his own age, but for all future ages; for the most enlightened as well as for the most ignorant: in which case, that his history might answer all the designs of Eternal Wisdom, it should have been proportioned to the ignorance of the Israelites, as little able to understand one system of philosophy as another, without giving so much reason to people, better informed, to believe him as ignorant as any uninspired person could be.

IF the ignorance and the errors, which betray themselves very grossly in the writings ascribed to MOSES, make it impossible to believe such an author divinely inspired, the confused, inconsistent, and unworthy notions of a supreme Being, which appear in his writings, shew very evidently, that the true God was unknown to him. He acknowledged but one God, and the people were forbid to worship any other. But then he puts this one God to as many and as unworthy uses, in the service of man, as the heathens put their many gods, of different orders, and he was, therefore, in this respect, more inconsistent than they were. The God of MOSES creates the world, makes man, and repents of it immediately, for a reason which he might have prevented by a little less indulgence to, what

what is called, free will. As soon as this indulgence had given an opportunity to the serpent to tempt EVE, and to EVE to tempt ADAM, who should have known the nature of serpents better, since he had just given to all animals the names that were proper to them; in short, as soon as they had eat the forbidden apple, and were fallen, they heard the voice of God, who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. He condemned them for their disobedience; he cursed the earth, for their sakes, and the serpent above all other beasts. Their eyes were then opened, they knew that they were naked, and they made themselves aprons of fig-leaves, which served to cover their nudity, till God made them coats of skins, for that purpose, and then drove them out of paradise. Thus death and sin entered into the world, and the crime of this unhappy pair was punished in their whole posterity. This strange story, so trifling and so serious, and wherein God is made a principal actor with the serpent and ADAM and EVE, has given occasion to much silly pains that have been taken, both by Jews and Christians, to lessen the absurdity of it, if that were possible. Since it is impossible, some have attempted to explain the whole allegorically, and it may not seem improbable that this allegory had been invented, among other Egyptian mysteries, to signify the introduction of physical and moral evil into the world, by the fault of man, and against the design of God. This however cannot be admitted by Christians; for if it was, what would become of that famous text whereon the doctrine of our redemption is founded? The whole therefore must be understood literally, and in that case the God who made the world and man, that is, the supreme Being, is the same God who walks in the garden, to enjoy the cool of the evening, who tries this famous cause, and insults our first parents by irony and farcasam.

THUS

THUS again, and to shew in another instance what inconsistency, as well as absurdity, MOSES imputed to his one God, let us observe, that he makes this God repent a second time that he had made man on the earth, because "he also was flesh, every imagination of his heart was evil, and all flesh had corrupted his way." For this reason he resolved to drown the whole world, and every living creature in it, except one man, called NOAH, his family, and as many birds, and beasts, and creeping things as were necessary to replenish the earth. This resolution taken, the God of MOSES orders NOAH to build an ark, or clumsy chest, in the fashion and in the proportions he prescribes very minutely. This done, he crowds all the living creatures, he intended to save, men, and birds, and beasts, and insects, into the ark; tho' great scholars pretend to shew, by a fair calculation, that far from being crowded, there was ample room for them all in it. As soon as they were in, God shut the door upon them, the deluge began, and had it's full effect. When it was over, and as soon as God smelled the sweet favor of a burnt-offering, on the altar NOAH had erected, he repented again, and resolved not to curse the ground any more for man's sake, nor for a reason, which should have hindered him from doing it at all, tho' he had done it twice already. He established a covenant with NOAH, with his sons, and with their posterity, and that he might remember this covenant, between him and the earth, or every living creature upon the earth, which he had promised to drown no more, he declares to them the institution of a rain-bow, designed to put him in mind of his promise, whenever he should bring a cloud over the earth.

ABRAHAM descended from NOAH by SEM, and God made a new covenant with him and his posterity. The supreme Being
con-

condescended to be the tutelary God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, and under this character he acted a part which a sensible heathen, not transported by presumptuous notions of his own importance, nor by the impudence of enthusiasm, would have thought too mean and too low for any of his inferior gods or dæmons. The whole history, from NOAH to ABRAHAM, and from ABRAHAM to the Exode, is a series of tales that would appear fit to amuse children alone, if they were found in any other book, tho' they served two great purposes of pride and ambition among an ignorant and barbarous people. They served to give JACOB the preference, over a much better man, over his brother ESAU. He acquired indeed this birth-right, and the prior blessing of a doating father, by a most infamous fraud; but the fraud was sufficient, even in the eye of God, to give the descendants of the younger brother, the Israelites, an entire preference over the descendants of the elder brother, the Edomites, and to set the former in the place of his favorite people. The same tales served the ambition, as well as the pride of the former, who claimed on their authority, as the legitimate offspring of ABRAHAM, a right to the land of Canaan, which God had given to ABRAHAM, and to all the glorious promises, which he had made to that patriarch. The other nations of the earth were plunged in idolatry; God left them in it; he neglected them, and thought it enough to preserve the knowledge of himself, and the purity of his worship, in Palestine: for which purpose he gave a particular law, as well as the country of the Canaanites, to the Israelites. If we consider his laws, as means of preserving monotheism, and the purity of worship, in opposition to polytheism and superstition, we shall find that no means could be worse proportioned to this end. If we consider the manner in which this people was conducted, by God himself, out of Egypt into the promised land; how they acquired the posses-

possession of it, by his immediate assistance, and by the execution of his orders, signified to their leaders ; we shall find, that nothing can be conceived more unworthy of an all-perfect Being. In order to preserve the purity of his worship, he prescribes to them a multitude of rites and ceremonies, founded in the superstitions of Egypt, from which they were to be weaned, or in some analogy to them. He succeeded accordingly. They were never weaned entirely from all these superstitions, and the great merit of the law of MOSES was teaching the people to adore one God, much as the idolatrous nations adored several. This may be called sanctifying pagan rites and ceremonies, in theological language ; but it is profaning the pure worship of God, in the language of common sense.--- In order to make good his grant to ABRAHAM of the land of Canaan, he orders the posterity of this patriarch to conquer it, and to exterminate the inhabitants. Just so the leaders of Huns, of Goths, and Vandals, might, and did make good their promises with the people who followed them. Just so the Spaniards made good the decree of ALEXANDER the sixth, when they conquered America. PIZARRO was not more cruel than JOSHUA, nor the franciscan monk, who accompanied him in his expedition against ATAHUALPA, so cruel as SAMUEL, who spoke in the name of the Lord. The franciscan monk excited the soldiers to kill the king of Peru in the heat of battle. The jewish priest hewed the king of the Amalekites "to pieces before the Lord," in cool blood, and SAUL was deposed for the clemency he had shewed, tho' he too had exercised cruelty enough to sate any human ferocity.

I AM not ignorant of the arbitrary assumptions, and silly evasions, which are employed to soften and excuse such acts of cruelty, by antient fathers, and modern commentators. You may remember, that we read together, not long ago, the an-

swer which CYRIL of Alexandria writ to the emperor JULIAN, after the death of this emperor. When we laid aside the Billinggate, and the long recriminations, by which if he could not defend MOSES, he tried to revenge himself on PLATO, we found little, or nothing, in it that deserved attention, except for it's absurdity ; for absurdity deserves some attention to warn us against it. The men who justify such cruelties, as I have mentioned, and many others, which might be cited from the Old Testament, upon any hypothesis whatever, must have very ill hearts as well as heads ; and he, who imputes them to the supreme Being, is worse than an atheist, tho' he pass for a saint.

It is very unnecessary, in writing to you, that I should dwell upon the stale, theological artifices that are employed to get over such objections as have been raised against the books of MOSES, and the other books of the Old Testament. The most absurd things they contain are called, sometimes, types and figures, tho' they have no more relation to the things said to be typified and signified by them, than to any thing that passes now in France. Others of the same kind are called allegories, and are explained, not by the book wherein they are found, but by some fanciful commentary on them. Sometimes the order of allegory is inverted, and things, plain in themselves, are assumed to be allegories, in order to establish, upon them, such doctrines as suit theological hypotheses ; many examples of which may be found in the writings of St. PAUL. But the great expedient they employ after him likewise, is that of mystery ; when things, that stand in flat contradiction to the divine attributes, and that can be neither disguised by allegory, nor softened by analogy, are urged against them. When a theist sees nothing repugnant to the wisdom and power, or any other attributes of a supreme, all-perfect Being,

in the works of God, and therefore thinks himself justified in rejecting the impiety of those who would impose on him, as the word of God, a book which contains scarce any thing that is not so, the divine has recourse to exclamation. Restrain your profane temerity, he cries. The wisdom of God is not like the wisdom of man, nor the justice of God like the justice of man; and who art thou, O man! who presumest to sound the depths of either? There is something so impudent, as well as absurd in this proceeding, that common as it is, one can see no example of it without surprise; for what can any man mean, who insists that I should receive these books, as the word of God, on account of the evident marks of a divine original, which he pretends to shew me in them; and then stops me in this examination, by assuming the very thing that is in question? There are many appearances, no doubt, in the physical and moral systems which may pass for mysteries, because we cannot fully comprehend them; but there is nothing in either of these, repugnant to any excellency which we ought to attribute to the supreme Being. We confess our ignorance, but we do not therefore call in question the divine attributes, nor disbelieve these systems to be his work, nor the law of nature to be his law. Had we the same certainty that the Jewish scriptures were his word, we might reason in the same manner about them. But we cannot believe them to be his word, tho' we know that the physical and moral systems are his work, whilst we find in them such repugnancies to the nature of an all-perfect Being; not mysteries, but absurdities; not things incomprehensible, but things that imply, manifestly, contradiction with his nature. They imply it so strongly, that if we believe in MOSES and his God, we cannot believe in that God, whom our reason shews us; nay, we must believe against knowledge, and oppose the authority of Jewish traditions to demonstration.

HERE will I conclude, having said enough, I think, to shew that the beginning of the world is sufficiently proved, by the universality of tradition; that the testimony of MOSES cannot be reputed an historical testimony, if we give no more credit to him than we should give to any other historian; and that we cannot admit his testimony, for divine, without absurdity and blasphemy.

L E T T E R S

O R

E S S A Y S

ADDRESSED TO

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

L E T T E R S

E S S A Y S

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq.

LETTERS or ESSAYS

ADDRESSED TO

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

The INTRODUCTION.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE you have begun, at my request, the work which I have wished long that you would undertake, it is but reasonable that I submit to the task you impose upon me. Mere compliance with any thing you desire, is a pleasure to me. On the present occasion, however, this compliance is a little interested; and that I may not assume more merit with you, than I really have, I will own that in performing this act of friendship, for such you are willing to esteem it, the purity of my motive is corrupted by some regard to my private utility. In short, I suspect you to be guilty of a very friendly fraud, and to mean my service, whilst you seem to mean your own.

IN leading me to discourse, as you have done often, and in pressing me to write as you do now, on certain subjects, you may propose to draw me back to those trains of thought,
which

which are, above all others, worthy to employ the human mind, and I thank you for it. They have been often interrupted by the business and dissipations of the world, but they were never so more grievously to me, nor less usefully to the public, than since royal seduction prevailed on me to abandon the quiet and leisure of the retreat I had chosen abroad, and to neglect the example of RUTILIUS, for I might have imitated him in this at least, who fled further from his country when he was invited home.

You have begun your ethic epistles in a masterly manner. You have copied no other writer, nor will you, I think, be copied by any one. It is with genius as it is with beauty; there are a thousand pretty things that charm alike; but superior genius, like superior beauty, has always something particular, something that belongs to itself alone. It is always distinguishable, not only from those who have no claim to excellence, but even from those who excel, when any such there are.

I AM pleased, you may be sure, to find your satire turn in the very beginning of these epistles, against the principal cause, for such you know that I think it, of all the errors, all the contradictions, and all the disputes which have arisen among those who impose themselves on their fellow-creatures for great masters, and almost sole proprietors of a gift of God, which is common to the whole species. This gift is reason, a faculty, or rather an aggregate of faculties, that is bestowed, in different degrees, and not in the highest certainly, on those who make the highest pretensions to it. Let your satire chastise, and if it be possible, humble that pride, which is the fruitful parent of their vain curiosity, and bold presumption; which renders them dogmatical in the midst of ignorance, and often sceptical.

in the midst of knowledge. The man who is puffed up with this philosophical pride, whether divine, or theist, or atheist, deserves no more to be respected, than one of those trifling creatures, who are conscious of little else than their animality, and who stop as far short of the attainable perfections of their nature, as the other attempts to go beyond them. You will discover as many silly affections, as much foppery and futility, as much inconsistency and low artifice, in one as in the other. I never met the mad-woman at Brentford, decked out in new and old rags, and nice and fantastical in the manner of wearing them, without reflecting on many of the profound scholars, and sublime philosophers of our own, and of former ages.

You may expect some contradiction, and some obloquy on the part of these men, tho' you will have less to apprehend from their malice and resentment, than a writer in prose on the same subjects would have. You will be safer in the generalities of poetry, and I know your precaution enough to know, that you will screen yourself in them against any direct charge of heterodoxy. But the great clamor of all will be raised when you descend lower, and let your muse loose among the herd of mankind. Then will those powers of dullness, whom you have ridiculed into immortality, be called forth in one united phalanx against you. But why do I talk of what may happen? You have experienced lately something more than I prognosticate. Fools and knaves should be modest at least, they should ask quarter of men of sense and virtue; and so they do till they grow up to a majority; till a similitude of character assures them of the protection of the great. But then vice and folly, such as prevail in our country, corrupt our manners, deform even social life, and contribute to make us ridiculous as well as miserable, will

claim respect for the sake of the vicious and the foolish. It will be then no longer sufficient to spare persons; for to draw even characters of imagination must become criminal, when the application of them to those of highest rank, and greatest power, cannot fail to be made. You began to laugh at the ridiculous taste, or the no taste in gardening and building, of some men who are at great expence in both. What a clamor was raised instantly? The name of TIMON was applied to a noble person with double malice, to make him ridiculous, and you who lived in friendship with him, odious. By the authority that employed itself to encourage this clamor, and by the industry used to spread and support it, one would have thought that you had directed your satyr in that epistle to political subjects, and had inveighed against those who impoverish, dishonor, and sell their country, instead of making yourself inoffensively merry at the expence of men who ruin none but themselves, and render none but themselves ridiculous. What will the clamor be, and how will the same authority foment it, when you proceed to lash, in other instances, our want of elegance even in luxury, and our wild profusion, the source of insatiable rapacity, and almost universal venality? My mind forebodes that the time will come, and who knows how near it may be, when other powers than those of Grub-street, may be drawn forth against you, and when vice and folly may be avowedly sheltered behind a power instituted for better, and contrary purposes; for punishment of one, and for the reformation of both.

BUT however this may be, pursue your task undauntedly, and whilst so many others convert the noblest employments of human society into sordid trades, let the generous muse resume her antient dignity, re-assert her antient prerogative, and instruct and reform as well as amuse the world. Let her

give a new turn to the thoughts of men, raise new affections in their minds, and determine in another and better manner the passions of their hearts. Poets, they say, were the first philosophers and divines, in every country; and in ours, perhaps, the first institutions of religion, and civil policy, were owing to our bards. Their task might be hard, their merit was certainly great. But if they were to rise now from the dead, they would find the second task, if I mistake not, much harder than the first, and confess it more easy to deal with ignorance than with error. When societies are once established, and governments formed, men flatter themselves that they proceed in cultivating the first rudiments of civility, policy, religion, and learning. But they do not observe that the private interests of many, the prejudices, affections, and passions of all, have a large share in the work, and often the largest. These put a sort of bias on the mind, which makes it decline from the strait course; and the further these supposed improvements are carried, the greater this declination grows, till men lose sight of primitive and real nature, and have no other guide but custom, a second and a false nature. The author of one is Divine Wisdom, of the other, human imagination; and yet whenever the second stands in opposition to the first, as it does most frequently, the second prevails. From hence it happens, that the most civilised nations are often guilty of injustice and cruelty, which the least civilised would abhor, and that many of the most absurd opinions and doctrines, which have been imposed in the dark ages of ignorance, continue to be the opinions, and doctrines of ages enlightened by philosophy and learning. If I was a philosopher, says MONTAIGNE, I would naturalise art, instead of artilising nature. The expression is odd, but the sense is good, and what he recommends would be done, if the reasons that have been given did not stand in the way; if the self-interest of some men, the madness of others, and the

universal pride of the human heart, did not determine them to prefer error to truth, and authority to reason.

WHILST your muse is employed to lash the vicious into repentance, or to laugh the fools of the age into shame; and whilst she rises sometimes to the noblest subjects of philosophical meditation, I shall throw upon paper, for your satisfaction, and for my own, some part at least of what I have thought and said formerly on the last of these subjects, as well as the reflections that they may suggest to me further in writing on them. The strange situation I am in, and the melancholy state of public affairs take up much of my time, divide or even dissipate my thoughts, and which is worse, drag the mind down by perpetual interruptions, from a philosophical tone, or temper, to the drudgery of private and public business. The last lies nearest my heart; and since I am once more engaged in the service of my country, disarmed, gagged, and almost bound as I am, I will not abandon it as long as the integrity and perseverance of those who are under none of these disadvantages, and with whom I now co-operate, make it reasonable for me to act the same part. Further than this, no shadow of duty obliges me to go. PLATO ceased to act for the commonwealth, when he ceased to persuade; and SOLON laid down his arms before the public magazine, when PISISTRATUS grew too strong to be opposed any longer with hopes of success.

THO' my situation and my engagements are sufficiently known to you, I choose to mention them on this occasion, lest you should expect from me any thing more than I find myself able to perform whilst I am in them. It has been said by many, that they wanted time to make their discourses shorter, and if this be a good excuse, as I think it may be often,

often, I lay in my claim to it. You must neither expect, in what I am about to write to you, that brevity which might be expected in letters, or essays, nor that exactness of method, nor that fulness of the several parts which they affect to observe, who presume to write philosophical treatises. The merit of brevity is relative to the manner, and style, in which any subject is treated, as well as to the nature of it; for the same subject may be sometimes treated very differently, and yet very properly, in both these respects. Should the poet make syllogisms in verse, or pursue a long process of reasoning in the didactic style, he would be sure to tire his reader on the whole, like LUCRETIVS, tho' he reasoned better than the Roman, and put into some parts of his work the same poetical fire. He may write, as you have begun to do, on philosophical subjects, but he must write in his own character. He must contract, he may shadow, he has a right to omit whatever will not be cast in the poetic mold, and when he cannot instruct, he may hope to please. But the philosopher has no such privileges. He may contract sometimes, he must never shadow. He must be limited by his matter, lest he should grow whimsical; and by the parts of it which he understands best, lest he should grow obscure. But these parts he must develop fully, and he has no right to omit any thing that may serve the purpose of truth, whether it please, or not. As it would be disingenuous to sacrifice truth to popularity, so it is trifling to appeal to the reason and experience of mankind, as every philosophical writer does, or must be understood to do, and then to talk, like PLATO, and his antient and modern disciples, to the imagination only. There is no need however to banish eloquence out of philosophy; and truth and reason are no enemies to the purity, nor to the ornaments of language. But as the want of an exact determination of ideas, and of an exact precision in the use of words, is inexcusable in a philosopher, he must pre-
serve

serve them, even at the expence of style. In short, it seems to me, that the business of the philosopher is to dilate, if I may borrow this word from TULLY, to press, to prove, to convince; and that of the poet to hint, to touch his subject with short and spirited strokes, to warm the affections, and to speak to the heart.

Tho' I seem to prepare an apology for prolixity even in writing essays, I will endeavor not to be tedious; and this endeavor may succeed the better, perhaps, by declining any over strict observation of method. There are certain points of that which I esteem the FIRST PHILOSOPHY, whereof I shall never lose sight; but this will be very consistent with a sort of epistolary licence. To digress, and to ramble, are different things; and he who knows the country thro' which he travels, may venture out of the high road because he is sure of finding his way back to it again. Thus the several matters that may arise, even accidentally before me, will have some share in guiding my pen.

I DARE not promise that the sections or members of these essays will bear that nice proportion to one another, and to the whole, which a severe critic would require. All I dare promise you is, that my thoughts, in what order soever they flow, shall be communicated to you just as they pass thro' my mind, just as they use to be when we converse together on those, or any other subjects; when we saunter alone, or as we have often done with good ARBUTHNOT, and the jocosè Dean of St. Patrick's, among the multiplied scenes of your little garden. That theatre is large enough for my ambition. I dare not pretend to instruct mankind, and I am not humble enough to write to the public for any other purpose. I mean, by writing on such subjects as I intend here, to make
some

some trial of my progress in search of the most important truths, and to make this trial before a friend, in whom, I think, I may confide. These epistolary essays, therefore, will be writ with as little regard to form, and with as little reserve, as I used to shew in the conversations which have given occasion to them, when I maintained the same opinions, and insisted on the same reasons in defence of them.

It might seem strange to a man, not well acquainted with the world, and in particular with the philosophical and theological tribe, that so much precaution should be necessary in the communication of our thoughts on any subject of the first philosophy, which is of common concern to the whole race of mankind, and wherein no one can have, according to nature and truth, any separate interest. Yet so it is. The separate interests we cannot have by God's institutions, are created by those of man; and there is no subject on which men deal more unfairly with one another than this. There are separate interests, to mention them in general only, of prejudice, and of profession. By the first, men set out in the search of truth under the conduct of error, and work up their heated imaginations often to such a delirium, that the more genius, and the more learning they have, the madder they grow. By the second, they are sworn, as it were, to follow all their lives the authority of some particular school, to which "*tanquam scopulo adhærescunt* *;" for the condition of their engagement is to defend certain doctrines, and even mere forms of speech, without examination, or to examine only in order to defend them. By both, they become philosophers as men became christians in the primitive church, or as they determined themselves about disputed doctrines; for, says HILARIUS, writing to St. AUSTIN, "Your holiness knows, that the greatest part of the faithful em-
brace,"

* TULLY..

“brace, or refuse to embrace a doctrine, for no reason
 “but the impression which the name and authority of some
 “body or other makes on them.” What now can a man
 who seeks truth, for the sake of truth, and is indifferent
 where he finds it, expect from any communication of his
 thoughts to such men as these? He will be much deceived, if
 he expects any thing better than imposition, or altercation.

Few men have, I believe, consulted others, both the living
 and the dead, with less presumption, and in a greater spirit
 of docility, than I have done; and the more I have con-
 sulted, the less have I found of that inward conviction on
 which a mind that is not absolutely implicit, can rest. I
 thought, for a time, that this must be my fault. I distrusted
 myself, not my teachers, men of the greatest name, antient
 and modern. But I found at last, that it was safer to trust
 myself than them, and to proceed by the light of my own
 understanding, than to wander after these “ignes fatui” of
 philosophy. If I am able therefore to tell you easily, and
 at the same time so clearly and distinctly as to be easily un-
 derstood, and so strongly as not to be easily refuted, how I
 have thought for myself, I shall be persuaded that I have
 thought enough on these subjects. If I am not able to do
 this, it will be evident that I have not thought on them
 enough. I must review my opinions, discover, and correct
 my errors.

I HAVE said, that the subjects I mean, and which will be the
 principal objects of these essays, are those of the first philoso-
 phy, and it is fit therefore, that I should explain what I under-
 stand by the first philosophy. Do not imagine that I under-
 stand what has passed commonly under that name, metaphysi-
 cal pneumatics, for instance, or ontology. The first are con-
 versant about imaginary substances, such as may, and may not
 exist.

exist. That there is a God we can demonstrate ; and altho' we know nothing of his manner of being, yet we acknowledge him to be immaterial, because a thousand absurdities, and such as imply the strongest contradiction, result from the supposition that the supreme Being is a system of matter. But of any other spirits we neither have, nor can have any knowledge, and no man will be inquisitive about spiritual physiognomy, nor go about to enquire, I believe, at this time, as EVODIUS enquired of St. AUSTIN, whether our immaterial part, the soul, does not remain united, when it forsakes this gross terrestrial body, to some æthereal body, more subtil, and more fine, which was one of the Pythagorean, and Platonic whimsies ; nor be under any concern to know, if this be not the case of the dead, how souls can be distinguished after their separation, that of DIVES for example from that of LAZARUS. The second, that is ontology, treats most scientifically of Being abstracted from all Being " de ente quatenus ens. It came in fashion whilst ARISTOTLE was in fashion, and has been spun into an immense web out of scholastic brains. But it should be, and I think it is already left to the acute disciples of LEIBNITZ who dug for gold in the ordure of the schools ; and to other German wits. Let them darken by tedious definitions, what is too plain to need any ; or let them employ their vocabulary of barbarous terms, to propagate an unintelligible jargon, which is supposed to express such abstractions as they cannot make, and according to which however they presume often to control the particular, and most evident truths of experimental knowledge. Such reputed science deserves no rank in philosophy, not the last, and much less the first.

I DESIRE you not to imagine neither, that I understand by the first philosophy, even such a science as my * Lord BACON

* Advan. of Learn. lib. 2.

describes, a science of general observations, and axioms, such as do not belong properly to any particular part of science, but are common to many, "and of an higher stage," as he expresses himself. He complains, that philosophers have not gone up to the "spring-head," which would be of "general, and "excellent use for the disclosing of nature, and the abridgment "of art;" tho' they "draw now and then a bucket of water "out of the well for some particular use." I respect, no man more, this great authority, but I respect no authority enough to subscribe on the faith of it, to that which appears to me fantastical, as if it were real. Now this spring-head of science is purely fantastical, and the figure conveys a false notion to the mind, as figures, employed licentiously, are apt to do. The great author himself calls these "axioms," which are to constitute his first philosophy, "observations." Such they are properly, for there are some uniform principles, or uniform impressions of the same nature to be observed in very different subjects, "*una eademque naturæ vestigia aut signacula diversis materiis & subjectis impressa.*" These observations, therefore, when they are sufficiently verified and well-established, may be properly applied in discourse, or writing, from one subject to another. But I apprehend that when they are so applied, they serve rather to illustrate a proposition than to "disclose "nature," or to "abridge art." They may have a better foundation than similitudes, and comparisons more loosely, and more superficially made. They may compare realities, not appearances; things that nature has made alike, not things that seem only to have some relation of this kind in our imaginations. But still they are comparisons of things distinct, and independent. They do not lead us to things; but things that are lead us to make them. He who possesses two sciences, and the same will be often true of arts, may find in certain respects a similitude between them, because he possesses both. If he
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did not possess both, he would be led by neither to the acquisition of the other. Such observations are effects, not means of knowledge, and therefore to suppose that any collection of them can constitute a science of an "higher stage," from whence we may reason "*à priori*" down to particulars, is, I presume, to suppose something very groundless, and very useless at best to the advancement of knowledge. A pretended science of this kind must be barren of knowledge, and may be fruitful of error, as the Persian magic was, if it proceeded on the faint analogy that may be discovered between physics and politics, and deduced the rules of civil government from what the professors of it observed of the operations, and works of nature in the material world. The very specimen of their magic, which my lord BACON has given, would be sufficient to justify what is here objected to his doctrine.

LET us conclude this head by mentioning two examples among others, which he brings to explain the better what he means by his first philosophy. The first is this axiom *, "if "to unequals you add equals, all will be unequal." This, he says, is an "axiom of justice, as well as of mathematics," and he asks whether there is not a "true coincidence between "commutative, and distributive justice, and arithmetical, and "geometrical proportion?" But I would ask in my turn, whether the certainty that any arithmetician, or geometrician has of the arithmetical, or geometrical truth, will lead him to discover this coincidence? I ask whether the most profound lawyer, who never heard, perhaps, this axiom, would be led to it by his notions of commutative, and distributive justice? Certainly not. He who is well skilled in arithmetic, or geometry, and in jurisprudence, may observe, perhaps, this uniformity of

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* Si inæqualibus addas æqualia, omnia erunt inæqualia.

natural principle or impressiion ; because he is so skilled, tho' to say the truth it be not very obvious : but he will not have derived his knowledge of it from any spring-head of a first philosophy, from any science of an "higher stage" than arithmetic, geometry, and jurisprudence.

THE second example is this axiom *, " that the destruction " of things is prevented by the reduction of them to their first " principles." This rule is said to hold in religion, in physics, and in politics, and MACHIAVEL is quoted for having established it in the last of these. Now, tho' this axiom be generally, it is not universally true ; and to say nothing of physics, it will not be hard to produce, in contradiction to it, examples of religious, and civil institutions, that would have perished if they had been kept strictly to their first principles, and that have been supported by departing more or less from them. It may seem justly matter of wonder, that the author of " the " advancement of learning " should espouse this maxim in religion, and politics, as well as physics, so absolutely, and that he should place it as an axiom of his first philosophy relatively to the three, since he could not do it without falling into the abuse he condemns so much in his " organum novum † ; " the abuse philosophers are guilty of when they suffer the mind to rise too fast, as it is apt to do, from particulars to remote and general axioms. That the author of the " political discourses " should fall into this abuse, is not at all strange. The same abuse runs through all his writings, in which, among many wise, and many wicked reflections, and precepts, he establishes frequently general maxims, or rules of conduct on a few particular examples, and sometimes on a single example. Upon the whole

* Interitus rei arcetur per reductionem ejus ad principia.

† ——— ut intellectus à particularibus ad axiomata remota, et quasi generalissima, ——— saliat, et volet.

whole matter, one of these axioms communicates no knowledge but that which we must have before we can know the axiom, and the other may betray us into great error when we apply it to use and action. One is unprofitable, the other dangerous; and the philosophy, which admits them as principles of general knowledge, deserves ill to be reputed philosophy. It would have been just as useful, and much more safe, to admit into this receptacle of axioms, those self-evident, and necessary truths alone, of which we have an immediate perception, since they are not confined to any special parts of science, but are common to several, or to all. Thus these profitable axioms, "what is, is; the whole is bigger than a part," and divers others, might serve to enlarge the spring-head of a first philosophy, and be of excellent use in arguing, "*ex præcognitis et præconcessis.*"

IF you ask me now, what I understand then by a first philosophy? My answer will be such as I suppose you already prepared to receive. I understand by a first philosophy, that which deserves the first place on account of the dignity, and importance of it's objects, "natural theology or theism, and "natural religion or ethics." If we consider the order of the sciences in their rise and progress, the first place belongs to natural philosophy, the mother of them all, or the trunk of the tree of knowledge, out of which, and in proportion to which, like so many branches, they all grow. These branches spread wide, and bear even fruits of different kinds. But the sap that made them shoot, and makes them flourish, rises from the root through the trunk, and their productions are varied according to the variety of strainers through which it flows. In plain terms, I speak not here of supernatural, or revealed science, and therefore, I say, that all science, if it be real, must rise from below, and from our own level. It cannot

cannot descend from above, nor from superior systems of being and knowledge. Truth of existence is truth of knowledge, and therefore reason searches after them in one of these scenes, where both are to be found together, and are within our reach ; whilst imagination hopes fondly to find them in another, where both of them are to be found, but surely not by us. The notices we receive from without concerning the beings that surround us, and the inward consciousness we have of our own, are the foundations, and the true criterions too, of all the knowledge we acquire of body and of mind ; and body and mind are objects alike of natural philosophy. We assume commonly that they are two distinct substances. Be it so. They are still united, and blended, as it were, together, in one human nature : and all natures, united or not, fall within the province of natural philosophy. On the hypothesis indeed that body and soul are two distinct substances, one of which subsists after the dissolution of the other, certain men, who have taken the whimsical title of metaphysicians, as if they had science beyond the bounds of nature, or of nature discoverable by others, have taken likewise to themselves the doctrine of mind, and have left that of body, under the name of physics, to a supposed inferior order of philosophers. But the right of these stands good ; for all the knowledge that can be acquired about mind, or the unextended substance of the Cartesians, must be acquired, like that about body, or the extended substance, within the bounds of their province, and by the means they employ, particular experiments and observations. Nothing can be true of mind, any more than of body, that is repugnant to these ; and an intellectual hypothesis, which is not supported by the intellectual phenomena, is, at least, as ridiculous as a corporeal hypothesis which is not supported by the corporeal phenomena.

IF I have said thus much in this place concerning natural philosophy, it has not been without good reason. I consider theology and ethics as the first of sciences in pre-eminence of rank. But I consider the constant contemplation of nature, by which I mean the whole system of God's works, as far as it lies open to us, as the common spring of all sciences, and even of these. What has been said, agreeably to this notion, seems to me evidently true; and yet metaphysical divines and philosophers proceed in direct contradiction to it, and have thereby, if I mistake not, bewildered themselves and a great part of mankind, in such inextricable labyrinths of hypothetical reasoning, that few men can find their way back, and none can find it forward into the road of truth. To dwell long, and on some points always, in particular knowledge, tires the patience of these impetuous philosophers. They fly to generals. To consider, attentively, even the minutest phenomena of body and mind mortifies their pride. Rather than creep up slowly, *à posteriori*, to a little general knowledge, they soar at once as far, and as high, as imagination can carry them. From thence they descend again armed with systems and arguments *à priori*, and regardless how these agree, or clash with the phenomena of nature, they impose them on mankind.

It is this manner of philosophizing, this preposterous method of beginning our search after truth, out of the bounds of human knowledge, or of continuing it beyond them, that has corrupted natural theology, and natural religion in all ages. They have been corrupted to such a degree, that it is grown, and was so long since, as necessary to plead the cause of God, if I may use this expression after *SENECA*, against the divine, as against the atheist; to assert his existence against the latter,
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to defend his attributes against the former, and to justify his providence against both. To both, a sincere and humble theist might say very properly, "I make no difference between "you on many occasions; because it is indifferent * whether "you deny, or defame the supreme Being;" nay, PLUTARCH, tho' little orthodox in theology, was not in the wrong, perhaps, when he declared the last to be the worst.

IN treating the subjects about which I shall write to you in these letters, or essays, it will be therefore necessary to distinguish genuine and pure theism, from the unnatural, and profane mixtures of human imagination; "what we can know of "God, from what we cannot know." This is the more necessary too; because, whilst true and false notions about God and religion are blended together in our minds, under one specious name of science, the false are more likely to make men doubt of the true, as it often happens, than to persuade men that they are true themselves. Now in order to this purpose, nothing can be more effectual than to go to the root of error, of that primitive error which encourages our curiosity, sustains our pride, fortifies our prejudices, and gives pretence to delusion. This primitive error consists in the high opinion we are apt to entertain of the human mind, tho' it holds, in truth, a very low rank in the intellectual system. To cure this error, we need only turn our eyes inward, and contemplate impartially what passes there from the infancy to the maturity of the mind. Thus it will not be difficult, and thus alone it is possible, to discover the true nature of human knowledge, how far it extends, how far it is real, and where, and how it begins to be fantastical.

SUCH an enquiry, if it cannot check the presumption, nor humble the pride of metaphysicians, may serve to undeceive others.

* *Utrum deum neges an infames.*

others. LOCKE pursued it. He grounded all he taught on the phænomena of nature. He appealed to the experience and conscious knowledge of every one, and rendered all he advanced intelligible. LEIBNITZ, one of the vainest, and most chimerical men that ever got a name in philosophy, and who is often so unintelligible, that no man ought to believe he understood himself, censured LOCKE as a superficial philosopher. What has happened? The philosophy of one has forced it's way into general approbation: that of the other has carried no conviction, and scarce any information to those who have mispent their time about it. To speak the truth, tho' it may seem a paradox, our knowledge on many subjects, and particularly on those which we intend here, must be superficial to be real. This is the condition of humanity. We are placed, as it were, in an intellectual twilight, where we discover but few things clearly, and none intirely, and yet see just enough to tempt us with the hope of making better and more discoveries. Thus flattered, men push their enquiries on, and may be properly enough compared to * IXION, who "imagined he had JUNO in his arms whilst he "embraced a cloud."

To be contented to know things, as God has made us capable of knowing them, is then a first principle necessary to secure us from falling into error; and if there is any subject upon which we should be most on our guard against error, it is surely that which I have called here the "first philosophy." God is hid from us in the majesty of his nature, and the little we discover of him, must be discovered by the light that is reflected from his works. Out of this light, therefore, we should never go in our enquiries and reasonings about his nature, his attributes, and the order of his provi-

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* LORD BACON.

dence : and yet upon these subjects, men depart the furthest from it, nay, they who depart the furthest, are the best heard by the bulk of mankind. The less men know, the more they believe that they know. Belief passes in their minds for knowledge : and the very circumstances, which should beget doubt, produce increase of faith. Every glittering apparition that is pointed out to them, in the vast wild of imagination, passes for a reality : and the more distant, the more confused, the more incomprehensible it is, the more sublime it is esteemed. He who should attempt to shift these scenes of airy vision, for those of real knowledge, might expect to be treated with scorn and anger, by the whole theological, and metaphysical tribe, the masters, and the scholars. He would be despised as a plebeian philosopher, and railed at as an infidel. It would be sounded high, that he debased human nature, which has a cognation, so the reverend and learned doctor CUDWORTH calls it, with the divine ; that the soul of man, immaterial and immortal by its nature, was made to contemplate higher and nobler objects than this sensible world, and even than itself ; since it was made to contemplate God, and to be united to him. In such clamor as this, the voice of truth and of reason would be drowned, and with both of them on his side, he who opposed it would make many enemies, and few converts. Nay, I am apt to think, that some of these, if he made any, would say to him, as soon as the gaudy visions of error were dispelled, and till they were accustomed to the simplicity of truth, "*pol me occidistis.*" Prudence forbids me, therefore, to write as I think to the world, whilst friendship forbids me to write otherwise to you. I have been a martyr of faction in politics, and have no vocation to be so in philosophy.

BUT there is another consideration which deserves more regard, because it is of a public nature, and because the common

mon interests of society may be affected by it. Truth and falshood, knowledge and ignorance, revelations of the Creator, inventions of the creature, dictates of reason, fallies of enthusiasm, have been blended so long together in our systems of theology, that it may be thought dangerous to separate them; lest by attacking some parts of these systems we should shake the whole. It may be thought that error, itself, deserves to be respected on this account, and that men who are deluded for their good, should be deluded on.

SOME such reflections as these it is probable that ERASMUS made, when he observed in one of his letters to MELANCTHON, that PLATO, dreaming of a philosophical commonwealth, saw the impossibility of governing the multitude without deceiving them. "Let not Christians lye, says this great divine, but let it not be thought neither, that every truth ought to be thrown out to the vulgar." "Non expedit omnem veritatem prodere vulgo." SCÆVOLA and VARRO were more explicit than ERASMUS, and more reasonable than PLATO. They held not only that many truths were to be concealed from the vulgar, but that it was expedient the vulgar should believe many things that were false. They distinguished at the same time very rightly, between the regard due to religions already established, and the conduct to be held in the establishment of them. The Greek assumed, that men could not be governed by truth, and erected on this principle a fabulous theology. The Romans were not of the same opinion. VARRO declared expressly, that if he had been to frame a new institution, he would have framed it "ex naturæ potius formulâ." But they both thought that things evidently false might deserve an outward respect, when they are interwoven into a system of government. This outward respect every good citizen will shew them in such a case, and they can claim no more in any. He will not pro-

pagate these errors, but he will be cautious how he propagates even truth, in opposition to them.

THERE has been much noise made about free thinking, and men have been animated, in the contest, by a spirit that becomes neither the character of divines, nor that of good citizens; by an arbitrary tyrannical spirit under the mask of religious zeal, and by a presumptuous, factious spirit under that of liberty. If the first could prevail, they would establish implicit belief and blind obedience, and an inquisition to maintain this abject servitude. To assert Antipodes might become once more as heretical as arianism, or pelagianism: and men might be dragged to the jails of some holy office, like GALILEI, for saying they had seen what in fact they had seen, and what every one else that pleased might see. If the second could prevail, they would destroy at once the general influence of religion, by shaking the foundations of it which education had laid. These are wide extremes. Is there no middle path in which a reasonable man and a good citizen may direct his steps? I think there is.

EVERY one has an undoubted right to think freely; nay, it is the duty of every one to do so, as far as he has the necessary means, and opportunities. This duty too is in no case so incumbent on him, as in those that regard what I call, the first philosophy. They who have neither means nor opportunities of this sort, must submit their opinions to authority: and to what authority can they resign themselves so properly, and so safely, as to that of the laws and constitution of their country? In general, nothing can be more absurd than to take opinions, of the greatest moment, and such as concern us the most intimately, on trust. But there is no help against it in many particular cases. Things the most absurd in speculation become necessary in practice. Such is
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the human constitution, and reason excuses them on the account of this necessity. Reason does even a little more; and it is all she can do. She gives the best direction possible to the absurdity. Thus she directs those who must believe because they cannot know, to believe in the laws of their country, and conform their opinions and practice to those of their ancestors, to those of CORUNCANIUS, of SCIPIO, of SCÆVOLA, not to those of ZENO, of CLEANTHES, of CHRYSIPPUS*.

BUT now the same reason that gives this direction to such men as these will give a very contrary direction to those who have the means, and opportunities the others want. Far from advising them to submit to this mental bondage, she will advise them to employ their whole industry, to exert the utmost freedom of thought, and to rest on no authority but her's, that is their own. She will speak to them in the language of the Soufys, a sect of philosophers in Persia, that travellers have mentioned. "Doubt, say these wise and honest free-thinkers, is the key of knowledge. He who never doubts, never examines. He who never examines, discovers nothing. He who discovers nothing, is blind, and will remain so. If you find no reason to doubt concerning the opinions of your fathers, keep to them, they will be sufficient for you. If you find any reason to doubt concerning them, seek the truth quietly, but take care not to disturb the minds of other men."

LET us proceed agreeably to these maxims. Let us seek truth, but seek it quietly as well as freely. Let us not imagine, like some who are called free-thinkers, that every man, who can think and judge for himself, as he has a right to do,
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* De nat. deor.

has therefore a right of speaking, any more than of acting according to the full freedom of his thoughts. The freedom belongs to him as a rational creature. He lies under the restraint as a member of society.

IF the religion we profess contained nothing more than articles of faith, and points of doctrine clearly revealed to us in the gospel, we might be obliged to renounce our natural freedom of thought in favor of this supernatural authority. But since it is notorious that a certain order of men, who call themselves the church, have been employed to make and propagate a theological system of their own, which they call christianity, from the days of the apostles, and even from these days inclusively; it is our duty to examine, and analyze the whole, that we may distinguish what is divine from what is human; adhere to the first implicitly, and ascribe to the last no more authority than the word of man deserves.

SUCH an examination is the more necessary to be undertaken by every one who is concerned for the truth of his religion, and for the honor of christianity, because the first preachers of it were not, and they who preach it still are not agreed about many of the most important points of their system; because the controversies raised by these men have banished union, peace, and charity out of the christian world; and because some parts of the system favor so much of superstition, and enthusiasm, that all the prejudices of education, and the whole weight of civil and ecclesiastical power can hardly keep them in credit. These considerations deserve the more attention, because nothing can be more true than what PLUTARCH said of old, and my Lord BACON has said since; one, that "superstition," and the other, that "vain controversies" are principal causes of atheism.

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I NEITHER expect nor desire to see any public revision made of the present system of christianity. I should fear an attempt to alter the established religion as much as they who have the most bigot attachment to it, and for reasons as good as theirs, tho' not entirely the same. I speak only of the duty of every private man to examine for himself, which would have an immediate good effect relatively to himself, and might have in time a good effect relatively to the public, since it would dispose the minds of men to a greater indifference about theological disputes, which are the disgrace of christianity, and have been the plagues of the world.

WILL you tell me that private judgment must submit to the established authority of "fathers" and "councils?" My answer shall be, that the fathers ancient and modern, in councils, and out of them, have raised that immense system of "artificial theology," by which genuine christianity is perverted, and in which it is lost. These "fathers" are "fathers" of the worst sort, such as contrive to keep their children in a perpetual state of infancy, that they may exercise perpetual, and absolute dominion over them. "*Quo magis regnum in illos exerceant pro sua libidine* *." I call their theology "artificial," because it is in a multitude of instances conformable neither to the religion of nature, nor to gospel christianity, but often repugnant to both, tho' said to be founded on them. I shall have occasion to mention several such instances in the course of these little essays. Here I will only observe, that if it be hard to conceive how any thing so absurd as the pagan theology stands represented by the fathers who wrote against it, and as it really was, could ever gain credit among rational creatures, it is full as hard to conceive how the "artificial" theology we speak of could
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* ERASMUS.

ever prevail, not only in ages of ignorance, but in the most enlightened. There is a letter of St. AUSTIN, wherein he says*, that he was ashamed of himself when he refuted the opinions of the former, and that he was ashamed of mankind when he considered that such absurdities were received, and defended. The reflections might be retorted on the saint, since he broached, and defended doctrines as unworthy of the supreme all-perfect Being, as those which the heathens taught concerning their fictitious, and inferior gods. Is it necessary to quote any other than that, by which we are taught that God has created numbers of men for no purpose but to damn them? “*Quisquis prædestinationis doctrinam invidiâ gravat †,*” says CALVIN, “*apertè maledicit deo.*” Let us say, “*Quisquis prædestinationis doctrinam asserit, blasphemat.*” Let us not impute such cruel injustice to the all-perfect Being. Let PAUL, and AUSTIN, and CALVIN, and all those who teach it, be answerable for it alone. You may bring “*fathers*” and “*councils*” as evidences in the cause of artificial theology: but “*reason*” must be the judge, and all I contend for is, that she should be so in the breast of every christian that can appeal to her tribunal.

WILL you tell me that even such a private examination of the christian system as I propose that every man, who is able to make it, should make for himself, is unlawful, and that if any doubts arise in our minds concerning religion, we must have recourse for the solution of them to some of that “*holy order*” which was instituted by God himself, and which has been continued by the imposition of hands in every christian society from the “*apostles*” down to the present “*clergy*?”
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* — jam pudet me ista refellere cum eos non puduerit ista sentire. Cum verò ausi sint etiam defendere, &c.

† Cal. Inf. lib. 3. c. 21.

My answer shall be shortly this, it is repugnant to all the ideas of wisdom and goodness to believe that the universal terms of salvation are knowable by the means of one order of men alone, and that they continue to be so even after they have been published to all nations. Some of your directors will tell you, that whilst Christ was on earth, the apostles were the church, that he was the bishop of it, that afterwards the admission of men into this order was approved, and confirmed by visions and other divine manifestations, and that these wonderful proofs of God's interposition at the ordinations, and consecrations of presbyters, and bishops lasted even in the time of St. CYPRIAN, that is, in the middle of the third century. It is pity that they lasted no longer for the honor of the church, and for the conviction of those who do not sufficiently reverence the religious society. It were to be wished perhaps, that some of the secrets of electricity were improved enough to be piously, and usefully applied to this purpose. If we beheld a SHECINAH, or divine presence, like the flame of a taper, on the heads of those who receive the imposition of hands, we might believe that they receive the "Holy Ghost" at the same time. But as we have no reason to believe what superstitious, credulous, or lying men, such as CYPRIAN himself was, reported formerly, that they might establish the proud pretensions of the clergy; so we have no reason to believe that five men of this order have any more of the divine spirit in our time, after they are ordained, than they had before. It would be a farce to provoke laughter, if there was no suspicion of prophanation in it, to see them gravely lay hands on one another, and bid one another receive the Holy Ghost.

Will you tell me finally, in opposition to what has been said, and that you may anticipate what remains to be said, that

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laymen

laymen are not only unauthorized, but quite unequal without the assistance of divines to the task I propose? If you do, I shall make no scruple to tell you, in return, that laymen may be, if they please, in every respect as fit, and are in one important respect more fit than divines to go through this examination, and to judge for themselves upon it. We say that the scriptures, concerning the divine authenticity of which all the professors of christianity agree, are the sole criterion of christianity. You add tradition, concerning which there may be, and there is much dispute. We have then a certain invariable rule, whenever the scriptures speak plainly. Whenever they do not speak so, we have this comfortable assurance, that doctrines, which nobody understands, are revealed to nobody, and are therefore improper objects of human enquiry. We know too, that if we receive the explanations and commentaries of these dark sayings from the clergy, we take the greatest part of our religion from the word of man, not from the word of God. Tradition indeed, however derived, is not to be totally rejected; for if it was, how came the canon of the scriptures, even of the gospels, to be fixed? How was it conveyed down to us? Traditions of general facts, and general propositions plain and uniform may be of some authority and use. But particular, anecdotal traditions, whose original authority is unknown, or justly suspicious, and that have acquired only an appearance of generality, and notoriety, because they have been frequently, and boldly repeated from age to age, deserve no more regard, than doctrines evidently added to the scriptures under pretence of explaining, and commenting them, by men as fallible as ourselves. We may receive the scriptures, and be persuaded of their authenticity on the faith of ecclesiastical tradition; but it seems to me, that we may reject, at the same time, all the artificial theology which has been raised on these scriptures
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by doctors of the church, with as much right as they receive the Old Testament on the authority of jewish scribes, and doctors, whilst they reject the oral law, and all rabinical literature.

He who examines on such principles as these, which are conformable to truth and reason, may lay aside at once the immense volumes of fathers, and councils, of schoolmen, casuists, and controversial writers, which have perplexed the world so long. Natural religion will be to such a man no longer intricate; revealed religion will be no longer mysterious, nor the word of God equivocal. Clearness and precision are two great excellencies of human laws. How much more should we expect to find them in the law of God? They have been banished from thence by artificial theology; and he who is desirous to find them must banish the professors of it from his councils, instead of consulting them. He must seek for genuine christianity with that simplicity of spirit, with which it is taught in the gospel by Christ himself. He must do the very reverse of what has been done by the persons you advise him to consult.

You see that I have said what has been said on a supposition, that however obscure theology may be, the christian religion is extremely plain, and requires no great learning, nor deep meditation to develope it. But if it was not so plain, if both these were necessary to develope it, is great learning the monopoly of the clergy since the resurrection of letters, as a little learning was before that æra? Is deep meditation, and justness of reasoning confined to men of that order by a peculiar and exclusive privilege? In short, and to ask a question which experience will decide, have these men, who boast that they are appointed by God to be the

interpreters of his secret will, to represent his person, and answer in his name, as it were, out of the sanctuary *, have these men, I say, been able in more than seventeen centuries, to establish an uniform system of revealed religion, for natural religion never wanted their help, among the civil societies of christians, or even in their own †? They do not seem to have aimed at this desirable end. Divided as they have always been, they have always studied in order to believe ‡, and to take upon trust, or to find matter of discourse, or to contradict and confute, but never to consider impartially, nor to use a free judgment. On the contrary, they who have attempted to use this freedom of judgment have been constantly, and cruelly persecuted by them.

THE first steps towards the establishment of artificial theology, which has passed for christianity ever since, were enthusiastical. They were not heretics alone, who delighted in wild allegories, and the pompous jargon of mystery. They were the orthodox fathers of the first ages, they were the disciples of the apostles, or the scholars of their disciples; for the truth of which I may appeal to the epistles, and other writings of these men that are extant, to those of CLEMENS, of IGNATIUS, or of IRENÆUS, for instance, and to the visions of HERMES that have so near a resemblance to the productions of BUNYAN.

THE next steps of the same kind were rhetorical. They were made by men who declaimed much, and reasoned ill, but who imposed on the imaginations of others by the heat of their own, by their hyperboles, their exaggerations, the acrimony of their style, and their violent invectives. Such were the

* N. B. I chuse to borrow these expressions from CALVIN, in order to shew how much they ascribe who are supposed to ascribe the least to this order.

† Cal. inf. l. 4. c. 3.

‡ BACON's Essays.

the CHRYSOSTOMS the JEROMS, an HILARIUS, a CYRIL, and most of the fathers.

THE last of the steps I shall mention were logical, and these were made very opportunely, and very advantageously for the church, and for artificial theology. Absurdity in speculation and superstition in practice had been cultivated so long, and were become so gross, that men began to see through the veils that had been thrown over them, as ignorant as those ages were. Then the schoolmen arose. I need not display their character, it is enough known. This only I will say, that having very few materials of knowledge, and much subtilty of wit, they wrought up systems of fancy on the little they knew; and invented an art, by the help of ARISTOTLE, not of enlarging, but of puzzling knowledge with technical terms, with definitions, distinctions, and syllogisms merely verbal: they taught what they could not explain, evaded what they could not answer, and he who had the most skill in this art, might put to silence, when it came into general use, the man who was consciously certain that he had truth, and reason on his side.

THE authority of the schools lasted till the resurrection of letters. But as soon as real knowledge was enlarged, and the conduct of the understanding better understood, it fell into contempt. The advocates of artificial theology have had, since that time, a very hard task. They have been obliged to defend in the light what was imposed in the dark, and to acquire knowledge to justify ignorance. They were drawn to it with reluctance. But learning, that grew up among the laity, and controversies with one another, made this unavoidable, which was not eligible, on the principles of ecclesiastical policy. They have done with these new arms, all that great parts,
great

great pains, and great zeal could do under such disadvantages, and we may apply to this order, on this occasion, "*si per-
gama dextrâ, &c.*" But their Troy cannot be defended, irreparable breaches have been made in it. They have improved in learning and knowledge; but this improvement has been general, and as remarkable, at least among the laity as among the clergy. Besides which, it must be owned that the former have had in this respect a sort of indirect obligation to the latter, for whilst these men have searched into antiquity, have improved criticism, and almost exhausted subtilty, they have furnished so many arms the more to such of the others as do not submit implicitly to them, but examine and judge for themselves. By refuting one another when they differ, they have made it no hard matter to refute them all when they agree: and, I believe, there are few books written to propagate, or defend the received notions of artificial theology, which may not be refuted by the books themselves. I conclude on the whole, that laymen have, or need to have, no want of the clergy in examining, and analysing the religion they profess.

BUT, I said, that they are in one important respect more fit to go through this examination without the help of divines than with it. A layman, who seeks the truth, may fall into error; but as he can have no interest to deceive himself, so he has none of profession to bias his private judgment, any more than to engage him to deceive others. Now the clergyman lies strongly under this influence in every communion. How indeed should it be otherwise? Theology is become one of those sciences which *SENECA* calls "*scientiæ in lucrum ex-
unt:*" and sciences, like arts, whose object is gain, are, in good English, trades. Such theology is; and men who could make no fortune, except the lowest, in any other, make often
the

the highest in this; for the proof of which assertion I might produce some signal instances among my lords the bishops. The consequence has been uniform, for how ready soever the tradesmen of one church are to expose the false wares, that is, the errors and abuses of another, they never admit that there are any in their own: and he who admitted this, in some particular instance, would be driven out of the ecclesiastical company, as a false brother, and one who spoiled the trade.

THUS it comes to pass that new churches may be established by the dissensions, but that old ones cannot be reformed by the concurrence, of the clergy. There is no composition to be made with this order of men. He, who does not believe all they teach in every communion, is reputed nearly as criminal, as he who believes no part of it. He, who cannot assent to the athanasian creed, of which archbishop TILLOTSON said, as I have heard, that he wished we were well rid, would receive no better quarter than an atheist from the generality of the clergy. What recourse now has a man who cannot be thus implicit? Some have run into scepticism, some into atheism, and, for fear of being imposed on by others, have imposed on themselves. The way to avoid these extremes, is that which has been chalked out in this introduction. We may think freely, without thinking as licentiously as divines do, when they raise a system of imagination on true foundations; or as sceptics do when they renounce all knowledge; or as atheists do when they attempt to demolish the foundations of all religion, and reject demonstration. As we think for ourselves, we may keep our thoughts to ourselves, or, communicate them with a due reserve, and in such a manner only, as it may be done without offending the laws of our country, and disturbing the public peace.

I CANNOT conclude my discourse on this occasion better than by putting you in mind of a passage you quoted to me once, with great applause, from a sermon of FOSTER, and to this effect: "Where mystery begins, religion ends." The apothegme pleased me much, and I was glad to hear such a truth from any pulpit, since it shews an inclination, at least, to purify christianity from the leaven of artificial theology, which consists principally in making things that are very plain mysterious, and in pretending to make things that are impenetrably mysterious very plain. If you continue still of the same mind, I shall have no excuse to make to you for what I have written, and shall write. Our opinions coincide. If you have changed your mind, think again, and examine further. You will find that it is the modest, not the presumptuous enquirer who makes a real, and safe progress in the discovery of divine truths. One follows nature, and nature's God, that is, he follows God in his works, and in his word; nor presumes to go further by metaphysical and theological commentaries of his own invention, than the two texts, if I may use this expression, carry him very evidently. They who have done otherwise, and have affected to discover, by a supposed science derived from tradition, or taught in the schools, more than they who have not such science can discover concerning the nature, physical and moral, of the supreme Being, and concerning the secrets of his providence, have been either enthusiasts, or knaves, or else of that numerous tribe who reason well very often, but reason always on some arbitrary supposition.

MUCH of this character belonged to the heathen divines, and it is, in all its parts, peculiarly that of the antient fathers, and modern doctors of the christian church. The former had reason, but no revelation to guide them; and tho' reason be al-

ways one, we cannot wonder that different prejudices, and different tempers of imagination warped it in them, on such subjects as these, and produced all the extravagancies of their theology. The latter had not the excuse of human frailty to make in mitigation of their presumption. On the contrary, the consideration of this frailty, inseparable from their nature, aggravated their presumption. They had a much surer criterion than human reason, they had divine reason, and the word of God to guide them, and to limit their enquiries. How came they to go beyond this criterion? Many of the first preachers were led into it because they preached or writ before there was any such criterion established, in the acceptance of which they all agreed; because they preached or writ in the mean time, on the faith of tradition, and on a confidence that they were persons extraordinarily gifted. Other reasons succeeded these. Skill in languages, not the gift of tongues, some knowledge of the Jewish cabala, and some of heathen philosophy, of PLATO's especially, made them presume to comment, and under that pretence to enlarge the system of christianity, with as much licence as they could have taken, if the word of man, instead of the word of God, had been concerned, and they had commented the civil, not the divine law. They did this so copiously, that, to give one instance of it, the exposition of St. MATTHEW's gospel took up ninety homilies, and that of St. JOHN's eighty-seven in the works of CHRYSOSTOM; which puts me in mind of a puritannical parson*, who, if I mistake not, for I have never looked into the folio since I was a boy and condemned sometimes to read in it, made one hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm.

Now all these men, both heathens and christians, appeared gigantic forms through the false medium of imagination, and

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habitual

* Dr. MANTON.

habitual prejudice; but were, in truth, as arrant dwarfs in the knowledge to which they pretended, as you and I and all the sons of ADAM. The former, however, deserved some excuse: the latter none. The former made a very ill use of their reason, no doubt, when they presumed to dogmatize about the divine nature; but they deceived nobody. What they taught, they taught on their own authority, which every other man was at liberty to receive, or reject, as he approved or disapproved the doctrine. Christians, on the other hand, made a very ill use of revelation and reason both. Instead of employing the superior principle to direct and confine the inferior, they employed it to sanctify all that wild imagination, the passions, and the interests of the ecclesiastical order suggested. This abuse of revelation was so scandalous, that whilst they were building up a system of religion, under the name of Christianity, every one who sought to signalize himself in the enterprize, and they were multitudes, dragged the scriptures to his opinion by different interpretations, paraphrases, and comments. ARIUS and NESTORIUS both, pretended that they had it on their sides: ATHANASIUS and CYRIL on theirs. They rendered the word of God so dubious, that it ceased to be a criterion, and they had recourse to another, to councils and the decrees of councils. He must be very ignorant in ecclesiastical antiquity, who does not know by what intrigues of the contending factions, for such they were and of the worst kind, these decrees were obtained: and yet an opinion prevailing that the Holy Ghost, the same divine spirit who dictated the scriptures, presided in these assemblies and dictated their decrees, their decrees passed for infallible decisions, and sanctified, little by little, much of the superstition, the nonsense, and even the blasphemy which the fathers taught, and all the usurpations of the church. This opinion prevailed, and
influenced

influenced the minds of men, so powerfully, and so long, that ERASMUS, who owns, in one of his letters, that the writings of OECOLAMPADIUS, against transubstantiation, seemed sufficient to seduce even the elect, "ut seduci posse videantur etiam electi," declares in another, that nothing hindered him from embracing the doctrine of OECOLAMPADIUS, but the consent of the church to the other doctrine, "nisi obstaret consensus ecclesiæ." Thus artificial theology rose on the demolitions, not on the foundations, of christianity; was incorporated into it, and became a principal part of it. How much it becomes a good christian to distinguish them in his private thoughts, at least, and how unfit even the greatest, the most moderate, and the least ambitious of the ecclesiastical order are to assist us in making this distinction; I have endeavored to shew you by reason, and by example.

It remains then, that we apply ourselves to the study of the first philosophy without any other guides than the works, and the word of God. In natural religion the clergy are unnecessary, in revealed they are dangerous guides.

ESSAY THE FIRST.

CONCERNING

The NATURE, EXTENT, and REALITY

OF

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

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The NATURE, EXTENT, and REALITY

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HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

SECTION I.

AMONG the many cavils that have been devised against the demonstrated existence of a first, intelligent, self-existent Cause of all things, this has been one; that things known must be anterior to knowledge, and that we may as well assert that the images of objects we see reflected made those objects, as that knowledge, or intelligence made them. HOBBS is accused of reasoning on this principle in his *Leviathan*, and his book *De Cive*, by the author of the *Intellectual System of the Universe*, and his argument in the place, where he mentions the notions that reason dictates to us, concerning the divine attributes, is thus stated. "Since knowledge and intelligence are nothing more in us, than a tumult of the mind, excited by the pressure of external objects on our organs, we must not imagine there is any such thing in God, these being things
" which

“ which depend on natural causes.” Now I think, this charge a little too hastily brought, and a little too heavily laid. So will any man who reads the context. HOBBS having said that, when we ascribe will to God, we must not conceive it to be in him, what it is in us, but must suppose it to be something analogous which we cannot conceive. He adds, “ in like manner when we attribute sight, and “ other sensations, or knowledge, and intelligence to God, “ which are in us nothing more, than a certain tumult of “ the mind, excited by the pressure of external objects on “ our organs, we must not imagine that any thing like “ this happens to God.” I am far from subscribing to many notions which HOBBS has advanced. But still the plain and obvious meaning of this passage, according to my apprehension, is not to deny that the supreme Being is an intelligent Being, but to distinguish between the Divine and human manner of knowing. If HOBBS did not assert a distinct kind of knowledge, and attribute “ the same clearly “ to God Almighty” upon this occasion, the omission will not serve to fix the brand of atheism upon him. On the contrary, whatever his other opinions were, this opinion may be reconciled to the most orthodox theism. It is more reasonable, and carries along with it a more becoming reverence, than the learned writer who makes the objection shews; when, like other divines, he supposes clearly by his reflections on this passage, and indeed by the whole tenor of his writings, that intelligence and knowledge in God are the same as intelligence and knowledge in man; that the divine differs from the human in degrees, not in kind, and that by consequence if God has not the latter, he has none at all.

ABSURD and impertinent vanity! We pronounce our fellow animals to be automates, or we allow them instinct, or we bestow

bestow graciously upon them, at the utmost stretch of liberality, an irrational soul, something we know not what, but something that can claim no kindred to the human mind. We scorn to admit them into the same class of intelligence with ourselves, tho' it be obvious, among other observations easy to be made, and tending to the same purpose, that the first inlets, and the first elements of their knowledge, and of ours, are the same. But of ourselves, we think it not too much to boast that our intelligence is a participation of the divine intelligence; that the mind of man, like that of God, contains in it the ideas of intelligible natures; that it does not rise from particular to general knowledge, but descends from universals to singulars; hovers, as it were, aloft over all the corporeal universe; is independent of the bodies that compose it, or proleptical to them, and in the order of nature before them.

SUCH wild notions as these, or the magic of such unmeaning sounds, and articulated air, which the warm imaginations of Asia and Africa first produced, have been echoed down to the present age, and have been propagated with so much success even in our northern and cold climates, that the heads of many reverend persons have been turned by a praternatural fermentation of the brain, or a philosophical delirium. None has been so more, I think, since the days of the latter platonists, and the reign of the schoolmen who may be called properly the latter peripatetics, than that of the divine I have just now quoted. He read too much to think enough, he admired too much to think freely, and it is impossible to forbear wishing that he had taken due notice of a passage in TULLY's Offices, "*Ne ut quidam Græca verba inculcantes jure optimo rideamur.*" Greek phraseology was in fashion among the Romans, as well as Greek philosophy, in TULLY's days, and it is reasonable to believe

that many things passed then under a Greek varnish, that would not have passed so well in mere Latin; just as we may observe, that many things have passed by the help of Greek and Latin among us, that would not have passed so well in mere English. TULLY reformed this pedantry indeed, but he did it rather with a view to enrich his language, than to determine his ideas, and he lost little or no advantage by the reformation: that advantage I mean which men take, who affect to know more than they do know, from which affectation the academicians, as much as they disclaimed knowledge, were not free. He invented Latin to answer Greek words; and readers, like writers, being apt to imagine that every new word denotes something new, this expedient served well enough to help out a system, or to get rid of troublesome objections. Thus vain phraseology has been always called in to the assistance of vain philosophy, and a learned mist has been raised in order to surprize, and impose, or to escape. These are some part of the arguties verbales, against which MONTAGNE declaims: and, to speak in his style, they may serve to enrich a man's tongue, but they will leave his understanding as poor as they found it, and much more perplexed.

I RETURN to the subject immediately before me, and I say that, since there must have been something from eternity, because there is something now, the eternal Being must be an intelligent Being, because there is intelligence now, (for no man will venture to assert that non-entity can produce entity, or non-intelligence intelligence) and such a Being must exist necessarily, whether things have been always as they are, or whether they have been made in time; because it is no more possible to conceive an infinite than a finite progression of effects without a cause. Thus the existence of a God is demonstrated,

monstrated, and cavil against demonstration is impertinent. It is so impertinent, that he who refuses to submit to this demonstration, among others of the same kind, has but one short step more to make in order to arrive at the highest pitch of absurdity: for surely there is but one remove between a denial of the existence of God, and a denial of our own existence; because, if we have an intuitive knowledge of the latter, we have the same intuitive knowledge of all those ideas that connect the latter with the former in demonstrating *à posteriori*.

Now if the existence of such a Being can be demonstrated, the atheist and the divine are both defeated. The atheist, because the intelligence of this first Cause of all things must have preceded all existence, except his own, with which it is co-eternal. The divine, because an essential difference is established, in consequence of this demonstration, between God's manner of knowing, and that which he has been pleased to bestow on his creatures. Human knowledge is not only posterior to the human system, but the very first elements of it are ideas which we perceive impressed by outward objects on our minds: and it will avail little to urge that our minds must be still independent of outward objects, since we not only know what is, but can frame ideas of what may be, tho' it is not; because every man who pleases may perceive, that all the ideas he frames of what is not are framed by the combinations he makes of his ideas of what is, and in no other manner, nor by any other means whatsoever. Thus then, if we could be supposed to know that there is an ideal world in the divine intellect, according to which this sensible world was made, yet still the difference between the human and divine manner of knowing would admit of no comparison.

BUT it was too presumptuous in PLATO to assert that the supreme Being had need of a plan, like some human architect, to conduct the great design, when he raised the fabric of the universe: and it is still more presumptuous to assert not only that the divine intellect is furnished with ideas, like the human, and that God reasons and acts by the help of them, but that your ideas and mine are God's ideas, and that the modifications (for that is the fashionable term) of our minds are the modifications of God's mind. We talk indeed of the eternal ideas of the divine mind, and allude to our manner of knowing, that we may understand ourselves and be understood by others the better, just as we are forced very often to employ corporeal images when we speak of the operations of our own minds. But these expressions, so much abused by those who are in the delirium of metaphysical theology, have no intention to be understood in a literal sense among men who preserve their reason. If they had, they should never be employed by me, since I should think them prophane as well as presumptuous.

I SHOULD think them silly too, and mere cant; for as one difference between God's manner of knowing and ours arises from what we are able to demonstrate concerning God, so there arises another from what we may know if we shut our ears to the din of hard words, and turn our attention inwards concerning man, and concerning these very ideas. Our knowledge is so dependent on our own system, that a great part of it would not be knowledge perhaps, but error, in any other. They who held, as I learn from doctor CUDWORTH that some philosophers did hold, that "sensible ideas and phantasms are impressed on the soul, as on a dead thing," maintained, no doubt, a great absurdity. ARISTOTLE's opinion.

nion was more conformable to universal experience, for he asserted, according to SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, that sense was like the instrument, and intellect like the artificer; that sense was first in the order of mental operations, but that intellect was first in dignity. Now this comparison is just enough. We have internal as well as external sense, mental as well as corporeal faculties, and active as well as passive powers, if you will allow passivity as well as activity to be included in the idea of power. But then, as our senses are few, incapable of giving us much information, and capable of giving it falsely, unless we are on our guard against their deceptions; so the faculties of our minds are weak, and their progress towards knowledge not only slow, but so confined, that they are not able to carry it to the full extent of the ideas, about which they are conversant, and which they have all contributed to frame. We must conceive, as well as we can, the knowledge of the supreme Being to be immediate, and absolute. Knowledge in us is mediate by the intervention of ideas, not only as far as sensible objects are concerned, and that goes a great way, but in the whole. It is such knowledge as we are fitted by the organization of our bodies, and the constitution of our minds to acquire. It is such as results from the relation established between them, and the system to which they belong. It is knowledge for us. It is, in one word, human, and relatively to us, when it is rightly pursued, real knowledge.

GENERAL ideas, or notions, such as the mind frames by its innate powers, such as are said to be archetypes, and to refer to nothing besides themselves, may seem to be materials of axiomatical, scientific, and, in a word, of absolute, real knowledge. But even this boasted knowledge is very precarious. These ideas or notions are not taken with exactness
from

from the nature of things on many occasions, and the same affections, and imperfections of the mind, that corrupt the first, corrupt the subsequent operations of it. Ideas or notions are ill abstracted first, and ill compared afterwards. The more complex, the more obscure they are, and the more important, the more liable they are likewise to be abused by prejudices and habits that infect the mind, and put a wrong bias on it. But further; our progression in this knowledge, such as it is, stops always very short of our aim. We soon want ideas, or want means of comparing those we have, and it is in vain that we struggle to get forward. It is in vain that we endeavor to force that barrier, which God has opposed to our insatiable curiosity. To what purpose, indeed, should we force it, if that was in our power, since we have reason to acknowledge, with the utmost gratitude to the Author of our nature, that every thing necessary to our well-being in the state wherein he has placed us lies on the human side of this barrier; within that extent, I mean, where the operations of our minds are performed with ease and vigor, and are attended with the certainty of knowledge, or the sufficient probability of opinion? Not only unattainable, but difficult, very often, is a term synonymous to unnecessary; as we might prove, I think, by some examples drawn even from mathematical knowledge. In short, the profound meditations of philosophers, which we are so apt to admire before we have thought for ourselves, have as much regard paid to them as they deserve, when they are made the amusements of men of sense and leisure; when they are used as exercise, without any other aim than to invigorate, and strengthen the mind, and prepare it for something more conducive to our happiness, and therefore more properly our business.

“ The

“ The good, the just, the meet, the wholesome rules
 “ Of temperance, and aught that may improve
 “ The moral life. * ”

This short account of human ideas, and human knowledge, no part of which can be applied, without blasphemy, and absurdity, to the supreme Being, nor be denied, without folly, and effrontery, of the human, is sufficient, I suppose, to constitute another difference between God's manner of knowing, and ours : a difference arising from those imperfections, and limitations of which every man is conscious.

BUT it is time now to ask, what then is the precise notion we are to entertain of the human mind? Shall we continue to think with some philosophers, antient and modern, that the soul, the rational soul, for they have given us more than one, is a spiritual, and divine substance, “ furnished with forms, “ and ideas to conceive all things by, and printed over with “ the seeds of universal knowledge, though the active energies of it are fatally united to some local motions in the “ body, and concurrently produced with them by reason of “ the magical union betwixt the soul and the body?” Shall we say too, that from this union all the imperfections of the human mind proceed, and that the perfection of our nature is to be quite abstracted from sensation, like the Janguis, or illuminated saints of the Indostan, whom Bernier mentions? Shall we endeavor, like these philosophers, by intenseness of thought, by fasting and other austerities, to rise up to the contemplation of the divinity, whom they assure that they see like a white, lively, ineffable light? Or shall we soften these pretensions a little, and embrace the system of a modern philo-

* JOHN PHELIPS.

philosopher*, who affirms that God is the place of ideas, as space is of body, and that this all-perfect mind containing the ideas of all created beings, it is in God alone that we perceive every thing exterior to the soul? Shall we assume, like another philosopher†, that our ideas are the only real sensible things; that we have no reason to imagine there are any substances but active thinking substances, and that it is absurd to ascribe power to bodies, or to suppose any power but active power, any agent but spirit, or any actions of spirit without volition?

Who does not see all this to be as inconceivable as that which it pretends to explain? Have the authors of such systems, from PLATO down to that fine writer MALEBRANCHE, or to that sublime genius, and good man, the bishop of CLOYNE, contributed to make us better acquainted with ourselves? I think not. They have done all that human capacity can do in a wrong method; but all they have done has been to vend us poetry for philosophy, and to multiply systems of imagination. They have reasoned about the human mind *à priori*, have assumed that they know the nature of it, and have employed much wit, and eloquence to account for all the phenomena of it upon these assumptions. But the nature of it is as much unknown as ever, and we must despair of having any real knowledge at all about it, unless we will content ourselves with that which is to be acquired, *à posteriori*. The mind of man is an object of physics, as much as the body of man, or any other body: and the distinction that is made between physics, and metaphysics, is quite arbitrary. His mind is part of his nature, as well as his body. Both of them together constitute his whole being, and as the first is the most noble part, I presume, we should determine his

* MALEBRANCHE.

† BERKELEY.

his species by it principally, which we do not, if his mind was not more liable than his figure to be confounded with that of other animals. Let us content ourselves therefore to trace his mind, to observe it's growth, and the progress it makes from it's infancy to it's maturity. Let us be content with particular, and experimental knowledge, upon which we may found a few general propositions, such as are or may be properly called *axiomata media*. But let us aim no longer at a general knowledge, too remote for our search; nor hope to discover more of intellectual nature by internal sense, than we are able to discover of corporeal nature by external. All that we can know of one and the other is, that we have such and such senses, and such and such faculties, and that divers sensations of the body and operations of the mind are produced in them on such and such apparent occasions.

S E C T. II.

To measure rightly our intellectual strength, and to apply it properly, in order neither to impose, nor be imposed upon, is our point of view. I shall not, therefore, say any thing further about the nature of mind in general, that secret spring of thought, unknown and unknowable, but shall content myself to observe in Mr. Locke's method and with his assistance, something about the phænomena of the human mind, by which we may judge surely of the nature, extent, and reality of human knowledge. I say, we may judge surely of them; because our ideas are the foundations, or the materials, call them which you please, of all our knowledge; because without entering into an enquiry concerning the origin of them, we may know so certainly as to exclude all doubt, what ideas we have; and because, when we know this, we know with

the same certainty what kinds, and degrees of knowledge we have, and are capable of having.

THUS we know that the first ideas, with which the mind is furnished, are received from without, and are caused by such sensations, as the presence of external objects excites in us, according to laws of passion and action, which the Creator has established. What these laws are, and how external objects become able to make such impressions on our organs, we know as little, and it is impossible to know any thing less, as those philosophers do, who have pretended, most extravagantly, to explain these laws, and to account for these impressions; or as those philosophers know of another system, who denying, as extravagantly, that any such power can belong to body, and affirming that it is absurd to talk of passive power, confine all activity and ascribe all such ideas of sensation to spirit alone. We are far from knowing how body acts on body, or spirit on spirit; how body operates on mind, and produces thought, or how mind operates on body, and produces corporeal motion. But this I know, that a leaf of wormwood conveys to my mind, by the sense of sight, and that of touch, for instance, the ideas of color, extension, figure, and solidity, as certainly as I know that it conveys thither, by the sense of taste, the idea of bitter; and as certainly as I know that the act of my mind, called volition, produced the motion of my hand which gathered the leaf. Our ignorance of causes does not hinder our knowledge of effects. This knowledge has been thought sufficient for us, in these cases, by infinite wisdom: and nothing can be more ridiculous than to hear men affirm dogmatically, when they guess at most, and that very wildly, and very precariously.

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As these ideas come to us from without, so there are others that arise in the mind, and proceed from the perception of it's own operations, to which a still greater number is to be added, that arise there from the concurrence of these joint causes, from perceptions of outward and inward operations, from external, and internal sense. Perception is the first faculty the mind exerts, and is common, whatever some of the others may be, to us and to the whole animal kind: The faculties that come in play afterwards seem to be active, but this seems to be passive; for we perceive ideas, however raised in the mind, whether we will or no: their esse is percipi, to have them we must perceive that we have them. Without this passive power, or this faculty, external objects might act upon us, but they would act to little purpose, for they would excite no ideas: as, on the other hand, without this action of external objects, the power or faculty of perception would be useless, or rather null, and by consequence all the other powers or faculties of the mind.

THERE is nothing, philosophically speaking, at least I could never find, to my sorrow, that there is any thing, which obliges us necessarily to conclude that we are a compound of material, and immaterial substance. If we are so, contrary to all appearances, (for they denote plainly one single system, all the parts of which are so intimately connected, and dependent one on another, that the whole begins, proceeds, and ends together) this union of a body and a soul must be magical indeed, as doctor CUDWORTH calls it. So magical, that the hypothesis serves to no purpose in philosophy, whatever it may do in theology, and is still less comprehensible than the hypothesis which assumes that, altho' our idea of thought be not included in the idea of matter, or body, as the idea of figure is, for instance,

in that of limited extension, yet the faculty of thinking, in all the modes of thought, may have been superadded by omnipotence to certain systems of matter; which it is not less than blasphemy to deny, tho' divines and philosophers, who deny it in terms, may be cited, and which, whether it be true or no, will never be proved false by a little metaphysical jargon about essences, and attributes, and modes.

BUT however this may be, concerning which it becomes men little to be as dogmatical as they are on one side of this question at least, and whatever strength and vigor, independent on the body, may be ascribed to the soul, the soul exerts none till it is roused into activity by sense. A jog, a knock, a thrust from without is not knowledge *. No. But, if we did not perceive these jogs, knocks, and thrusts from without, we should remain just as we came into the world, void even of the first elements of knowledge. Not only the inward, active powers of the mind would be unemployed, but we may say, that they would be non-existent. The human soul is so far from being furnished with forms and ideas to perceive all things by, or from being impregnated, I would rather say than printed over, with the seeds of universal knowledge, that we have no ideas till we receive passively the ideas of sensible qualities from without. Then indeed the activity of the soul, or mind commences, and another source of original ideas is opened: for then we acquire ideas from, and by the operations of our minds. Sensation would be of little use to form the understanding, if we had no other faculty than mere passive perception; but without sensation these other faculties would have nothing to operate upon, reflection would have by consequence nothing to reflect upon, and it is by reflection that we multiply our stock of ideas, and fill that magazine, which

* CUDWORTH.

which is to furnish all the materials of future knowledge. In this manner, and in no other, we may say, that "all our ideas arise from our senses, and that there is nothing in the mind which was not previously in sense." But these propositions should not be advanced, perhaps, as generally as they are sometimes by logicians, lest they should lead into error, as maxims are apt to do very often. Sensation is the greater, reflection the smaller source of ideas. But these latter are as clear, and distinct, and convey knowledge that may be said to be more real than the former. Sense gave occasion to them, but they never were in sense properly speaking. They are, if I may say so, of the mind's own growth, the elements of knowledge, more immediate, less relative, and less dependent than sensitive knowledge, as any man will be apt to think, who compares his ideas of remembering, recollecting, bare thought, and intenseness of thought, with those of warm and hot, of cool and cold. DES CARTES might have said, "I see, I hear, I feel, I taste, I smell; therefore I am." But surely he might say too, "I think, I reflect, I will; therefore I am." Let us observe, however, that it belongs only to a great philosopher to frame an argument to prove to himself that he exists, which is an object of intuitive knowledge, and concerning which it is impossible he should have any doubt. In the mouth of any other person, "I think, therefore I am," would be very near akin to I am, therefore I am.*

Thus it will appear when we contemplate our understanding in the first steps towards knowledge, that corporeal, animal sense, which some philosophers hold in great contempt, and which

* Je ne vois pas que vous ayez eu besoin d'un si grand appareil, puisque d'ailleurs vous étiez déjà certain de votre existence, et que vous pouviez inferer la même chose de quelque autre que ce fut de vos actions, étant manifeste par la lumière naturelle que tout ce qui agit est, ou existe.

Objec. of GASSENDI to the second Medit.

which does not deserve much esteem, communicates to us our first ideas, sets the mind first to work, and becomes, in conjunction with internal sense, by which we perceive what passes within, as by the other what passes without us, the foundation of all our knowledge. This is so evidently true, that even those ideas, about which our reason is employed in the most abstract meditations, may be traced back to this original by a very easy analyse. Since these simple ideas therefore are the foundations of human knowledge, this knowledge can neither be extended wider, nor elevated higher than in a certain proportion to them. If we consider these ideas like foundations, they are extremely narrow, and shallow, neither reaching to many things, nor laid deep in the nature of any. If we consider them like materials, for so they may be considered likewise, employed to raise the fabric of our intellectual system, they will appear like mud and straw, and lath, materials fit to erect some frail, and homely cottage, but not of substance, nor value sufficient for the construction of those enormous piles, from whose lofty towers philosophers would persuade us that they discover all nature subject to their inspection, that they pry into the source of all being, and into the inmost recesses of all wisdom. But it fares with them, as it did with the builders in the plains of Senaar, they fall into a confusion of languages, and neither understand one another, nor are understood by the rest of mankind.

HAVING taken this view of our first, and simple ideas, it is necessary, in order to make a true estimate of human knowledge, that we take such a view likewise of those faculties by the exercise of which our minds proceed in acquiring knowledge. I have mentioned perception; and retention, or memory ought to follow: for as we should have no ideas without perception, so we should lose them, as fast as we get them,
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without retention. When it was objected to DES CARTES that, if thought was the essence of the soul, the soul of the child must think in the mother's womb; and when he was asked, how then it came to pass that we remember none of those thoughts? He maintained, according to his usual method, one hypothesis by another, and assumed that memory consists in certain traces made on the brain by the thoughts that pass through it, and that as long as they last we remember, but that the brain of the child in the womb being too moist, and too soft to preserve these traces, it is impossible he should remember out of the womb what he thought in it. Thus memory seems to be made purely corporeal by the same philosopher, who makes it on some occasions purely intellectual. He might distinguish two memories by the same hypothetical power, by which he distinguished two substances, that he might employ one or the other as his system required. If you consult other philosophers on the same subject, you will receive no more satisfaction: and the only reasonable method we can take, is to be content to know intuitively, and by inward observation, not the cause, but the effects of memory, and the use of it in the intellectual system.

By this faculty then, whatever it be, our simple ideas, which have been spoken of already, are preserved with greater, and our complex ideas, which remain to be spoken of, with less facility. Both one and the other require to be frequently raised in the mind, and frequently recalled to it. I say, with the rest of the world, to be raised, and to be recalled; but surely these words come very short of expressing the wonderful phenomena of memory. The images that are lodged in it present themselves often to the mind without any fresh sensation, and so spontaneously, that the mind seems as passive in these secondary perceptions, as it was in receiving the first impressions. Our simple ideas, and
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even our complex ideas and notions, return sometimes of themselves, we know not why, nor how, mechanically, as it were, uncalled by the mind, and often to the disturbance of it in the pursuit of other ideas, to which these intruders are foreign. On the other hand, we are able, at our will and with design, to put a sort of force on memory, to seize, as it were, the end of some particular line, and to draw back into the mind, a whole set of ideas that seem to be strung to it, or linked one with the other. In general; when images, essences, ideas, notions, that existed in any mind, are gone out of it, and have no longer any existence there, the mind is often able to will them into existence again, by an act of which we are conscious, but of which we know nothing more, than that the mind performs it. These phænomena are more surprising, and less to be accounted for than the action of external objects on the organs of sense in the first production of ideas, which is an observation that deserves the notice of those philosophers who deny such action because they cannot comprehend it.

BUT still this faculty is proportioned to our imperfect nature, and therefore weak, slow, and uncertain in it's operations. Our simple ideas fade in the mind, or fleet out of it, unless they are frequently renewed: and the most tenacious memory cannot maintain such as are very complex, without the greatest attention, and a constant care, nor always with both. All our ideas in general are recalled slowly by some, and successively by every mind. THEMISTOCLES was famous, among other parts wherein he excelled, for his memory; but when he refused the offer SIMONIDES made him, it was, I suppose, because he did not want the poet's skill to improve his memory, and because he knew by experience, that the great defects of this faculty are neither to be cured, nor supplied by art. In what proportion soever it is given, it may be improved to
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some degree, no doubt, but memory will never present ideas to the human mind, as it does perhaps to superior intelligences, like objects in a mirror, where they may be viewed at every instant, all at once, without effort or toil, in their original freshness, and with their original precision, such as they were when they first came into the mind, or when they were first framed by it. Could memory serve us in this manner, our knowledge would be still very imperfect; but many errors into which we fall, and into which we are seduced, would be avoided, and the endless chicanery of learned disputation would be stopped in a great measure. It is for this reason I have said so much of this faculty of the mind, as you will have occasion soon to observe.

THE faculties, necessary for my purpose to be mentioned next, are those of compounding simple into complex ideas, and of comparing our ideas, which implies the just and nice discernment of them, in order to perceive the innumerable relations which they bear to one another. These are some of the steps by which the mind attempts to rise from particular to general knowledge. They have been called arts of the mind, but improperly, in some respects; for tho' the mind is forced to employ several arts, and to call in sense to the aid of intellect, even after it has full possession of its ideas, to help out its imperfect manner of knowing, and to lengthen a little its short tether; yet the composition, and comparison of ideas is plainly a lesson of nature: this lesson is taught us by the very first sensations we have. As the mind does not act till it is roused into action by external objects; so when it does act, it acts conformably to the suggestions it receives from these impressions, and takes with its first ideas the hints how to multiply, and improve them. If nature makes us lame, she gives crutches to lean upon. She helps us to walk where we

cannot run, and to hobble where we cannot walk. She takes us by the hand, and leads us by experience to art.

NATURE then has united in distinct substances, as we commonly speak, various combinations of those qualities, each of which causes in us the sensation it is appropriated to cause, and our organs are fitted to receive; so that several being thus combined, and making their impression together, may be said to cause a complex sensation. Thus we receive, among other ideas, those of soft and warm at the same instant, from the same piece of wax; or of hard and cold from the same piece of ice. Thus again; we receive the more complex ideas which substances still more composed, that is, substances wherein a greater variety of these qualities co-exists, are fitted to raise in us, such, for instance, as the idea of a man, or an horse. As soon as we are born, various appearances present themselves to the sight, the din of the world strikes our ears, in short a multitude of impressions made on the tender organs of sense convey a multitude of ideas simple and complex, confusedly, and continually into the mind. The latter indeed, whether nature obtrudes them, or we make them, are composed of the former, and therefore we give very properly the first place to these in all discourses concerning ideas. But they have a priority of order rather than of existence; for the complex idea of the nurse comes into the mind as soon as the eyes of the child are opened, and is most probably the first idea received by the sight, tho' the simple idea produced by the taste of milk may have got into the mind a little sooner. Nor does the lesson of nature end here: she carries it on to all the different compositions of our simple ideas, and to all the different combinations we frame of our simple and complex ideas; from substances to modes, the dependencies, and affections of substances, and from them to the relations of things one to another;

another ; that is, she carries it on to all the operations of the mind, and to all the objects of our thoughts in the acquisition of knowledge.

IF I meant by modes nothing but manners of being as some do, I should not ascribe our ideas of them to a further lesson of nature. She taught us this lesson, when she obtruded on us the complex ideas of substances. At least it seems so to me, who cannot comprehend the distinction of substances, and of mode or manner of being, as of two ideas that may be perceived separately, the one of a thing that subsists by itself, the other of a manner of being which cannot subsist by itself, but determines this thing to be what it is. I cannot consider a mode without referring it in my mind to something, of which it is or may be the mode : neither can I consider a substance otherwise than relatively to its modes, as something whereof I have no idea, and in which the modes, of which I have ideas, subsist. The complex idea we have, of every substance, is nothing more than a combination of several sensible ideas which determine the apparent nature of it to us. I say the apparent nature, and to us ; for I cannot agree that these modes, such of them as fall under our observation, limit the real nature, or determine even the apparent nature to other beings. On the whole it will appear, whenever we consider this matter further, that the far greatest part of what has been said by philosophers about Being, and substance, indeed all they have advanced beyond those clear and obvious notions which every thinking man frames, or may frame without their help, is pure jargon, or else something very trite, disguised under a metaphysical mask, and called by an hard name ontology, or ontosophy.

BUT to proceed, or rather to return ; I understand by mode, in this place something else, something that carries our knowledge further than the complex ideas of substances. I understand in short what Mr. LOCKE understands by simple and mixed modes. The various combinations that our minds make of the same simple idea, and the various compositions that they make of simple ideas of different kinds. These ideas added to those of substances, and the whole stock compleated by such as the mind acquires of the relations of it's ideas, in comparing them as far as it is able to compare them, make up the entire system of human knowledge : and in the process of it from first to last, we are assisted directly or indirectly by the lessons of nature that have been, or that are to be mentioned.

IDEAS of things computable, and measurable are the objects of mathematics. Ideas of moral, and immoral actions are the objects of ethics. From whence has the mathematician his first ideas of number, or his first ideas of solid extension, of lines, surfaces, and figures ? From whence has the moralist his first ideas of happiness, and unhappiness, of good, and evil ? The mind can exercise a power, in some sort arbitrary, over all it's simple ideas, that is, it can repeat them at it's pleasure, and it can frame them into complex ideas, without any regard to actual, tho' with a regard to possible existence ; which regard will be always preserved, unless the mind be disordered. The mind then has a power of framing all the different compositions, and combinations of ideas about which these sciences are conversant ; but yet these operations are not performed by the native energy of the mind alone, without any help, without any pattern. Nature lends the help, nature sets the pattern, when complex ideas of these modes and relations force themselves on the mind, as the complex ideas of substances do,

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THAT every distinct object of external, and internal sense gives us the idea of an unit, or of one, is obvious to reflection: and I think it is no less obvious, that these objects suggest to the mind, nay oblige the mind to make various repetitions of this idea, and to frame all the simple modes of number by adding unit to unit. Thus for instance, we look up by day and we see one sun, by night and we see one moon. PLUTARCH's countryman, indeed, counted two moons; for he could not conceive that the moon he had left behind him in Bœotia, and that he saw at Athens, were the same. But tho' we see but one sun, and one moon, we see many stars. We attempt to count them, that is, we assign marks, or sounds to signify how many times we repeat the idea of an unit, which each of them gives us separately; or else we form a confused idea of numberless repetitions of this idea, like the savages who lift up both hands, and extend their fingers to shew that they have seen ten suns on their journey, or hold out an handful of their hair when they want to signify a number of suns which they cannot signify otherwise; because they have neither sounds, nor marks for the greater collections of units.

As arithmetic is one, so is geometry another constituent part of mathematics, and the very name points out to us, not only the objects, but the original of this science. I do not believe, on the word of HERODOTUS, nor even of STRABO, that the Egyptians were the inventors of it. I believe this, almost as little, as I believe on the word of JOSEPHUS, that antediluvian astronomers had engraved their observations on two pillars which existed in his time. But this tradition, whereby the invention of geometry is ascribed to a nation more antient than tradition itself, tho' it may be fabulous, communicates to us,
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like many others that are so, a true fact. The true fact, I think, is this ; that as soon as men ceased to range the woods, and plains in common, like their fellow animals, if they ever did so ; as soon as societies were formed, and in those societies a division of property was made ; nature, that led them to assign, led them to ascertain possessions. They did both, most probably, at first by fight, and guess. They paced out these possessions afterwards in length, and breadth ; and ideas of modes of space were framed like ideas of modes of number : an unit twelve times repeated makes a dozen, twenty times repeated it makes a score. The length of one of their feet was, to these first geometricians, like an unit to the first arithmeticians. So many feet, five, I think, according to PLINY, made a pace, and one hundred and five-and-twenty of these made a stated measure of distance that continued long in use ; for the stadium consisted of one hundred and twenty-five paces, according to the same author. Thus measuring, the practical part of geometry, came into use : and when it had been applied to two dimensions, it was soon applied to all three. The use of it was great, not only in the first distribution of property, but in every alteration of it, and especially after such confusions of it, as the inundations of the Nile might cause annually in Egypt, or other devastations in that and in other countries.

NATURE that urged men, by necessity, to invention, helped them to invent. The natural face of a country taught them to give it an artificial face, and their own first rude essays in laying out lands, and building habitations, led them to contemplate the properties of lines, surfaces, and solids ; and, little by little, to form that science, the pride of the human intellect, which has served to so many great and good purposes, and the application of which is grown, or growing perhaps,

haps, into some abuse. Nature set the example, example begot imitation, imitation practice, practice introduced speculation, and speculation in it's turn improved practice. I might easily run through other examples of the same kind, to shew how the first principles of arts and sciences are derived from ideas furnished by the productions, and operations of nature, such as our senses represent them to us ; nay, how instinct instructs reason, the instinct of other animals the reason of man. But this would be superfluous trouble in writing to you, who have touched this subject so well, where you introduce nature speaking to man, in the third of your ethic epistles.

I WILL only mention, as I proposed to do, the ideas, or notions, about which moral philosophy is conversant. I distinguish here, which I should have done perhaps sooner, and I think with good reason, between ideas, and notions ; for it seems to me, that as we compound simple into complex ideas, so the compositions we make of simple, and complex ideas may be called, more properly, and with less confusion and ambiguity, notions. Simple ideas, simple modes, complex ideas, mixed modes, and relations of all these, as well as the relations of the relations, are frequently blended together voluntarily, as use invites, or judgment directs ; and, thus blended, they may therefore seem to be original, and untaught. But yet certain it is, that such notions as these obtrude themselves on the mind, as naturally and as necessarily, tho' not so directly nor immediately, as the complex ideas of substances, or any other complex ideas. Let us observe this in an example. We see one man kill another : and the complex idea, signified by the word kill, is obtruded on our sense as much as the complex idea of the man killed, or of his killer. The mind retains this image, and joining to it various ideas of circumstances and relations, of causes and effects, of motive;

tives and consequences, all which ideas have been raised in our minds by experience and observation, such notions as we intend by the words murder, assassination, parricide, or fratricide are framed.

NATURE teaches us, by experience and observation, not only to extend our notions, but to distinguish them with greater precision, just as we learn to rectify simple ideas of sensation, and to control sense by sense, If I may say so. Mr. LOCKE observes, that we learn first the names of these complex ideas and notions from other men, and the signification of them afterwards. Which is true, and it is the most early, and most common method whereby we acquire them. But this makes no alteration in the case. Whether the impressions that excited these complex ideas, and gave the mind occasion and means to form these notions, were made on our minds, or on the minds of other men; and whether the names that signify them were given by us, or by others, it is plain that nature taught mankind to make them, directly when she obtruded them, and indirectly when we seemed to invent them without any assistance from outward objects. The first is evident of itself, and the second will appear so too, if we consider that in learning their names, and the signification of these names, we learned to decompound them; and that by learning to decompound some, the mind was instructed to compound others, even such, perhaps, as existed by these means in idea and notion, before the combinations, whereof they became the archetypes, existed in act. Our ideas of relations, and of the relations of relations which are comprehended so often in our complex ideas, or notions, are not positive beings that exist by themselves, and can be contemplated by themselves. Modes are the affections and dependencies of substances; relations are the affections and dependencies of substances and modes; and

no one of them can exist any longer than both the ideas that produced it, or by the comparison of which it was framed, subsist. It might seem therefore the less likely, that outward objects should communicate such ideas to the mind, or even instruct the mind to frame them; and yet so it is. That act of the mind that sets two objects before our internal sight, and by referring from one to the other includes both in the same consideration, is plainly suggested to us by the operations of outward objects on our senses. We can neither look up, nor down without perceiving ideas of bigger and less, of more and fewer, of brighter and darker, and a multitude of other relations, the ideas of which arise in the mind as fast as the ideas of things of which they express the relations, and almost prevent reflection. When the mind, thus taught, employs reflection, the number of these relative ideas increases vastly. Thus for instance, when we observe the alterations that are made by nature, or by art, in our complex ideas of substances, or when we reflect on the continual vicissitude and flux of all the affections and passions, and the consequences of them, how can we avoid framing the ideas of cause and effect? That which produces, or seems to us to produce the alteration gives us the idea of cause, and that which receives the alteration gives us the idea of effect. I go no further into the consideration of our ideas of relations physical, and moral. They are numberless, and they must needs be so; since every idea, or notion we have, tho' it be in itself one single object of thought, becomes the object of a thousand when it is compared with all those with which it may be compared in some respect or other.

S E C T. III.

THESE, and such as these are all the ideas we have really, and are capable of having, derived originally from sense, external and internal. These too, and such as these are the faculties by which we improve and increase our stock, and such as all these are, such must our knowledge be; for since human knowledge is nothing else than the perception of the agreement or disagreement, connection or repugnancy of our ideas, those that are simple must determine the nature of those that are complex; those that are complex that of our notions; our notions that of the principles we establish, and that of the principles we establish that of all the consequences we draw from them. Error, in any one step of this gradation, begets error in all that follow: and tho' we compare ever so exactly, conclude ever so truly, and in a word reason ever so well, our reasoning must terminate in error whenever this happens. It cannot terminate in knowledge. But before I leave this subject, I must go over it again, that I may carry the reflections upon it further.

How inadequate our ideas are to the nature of outward objects, and how imperfect therefore all our knowledge is concerning them, has been observed transiently above, and has been too often and too well explained to be over much insisted on by me. That there are such objects, material objects, neither spirits nor ideas, and that they act on one another and on us in various manners, and according to various laws, no man can doubt, any more than he can doubt of that perception by which he distinguishes their presence and their absence, according to the difference between the ideas they excite in one case, and those he retains in the other. We can
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doubt of this, I think, no more than we can doubt whether we are free agents, or whether we are necessarily determined to all we do; no more than we can doubt of many other things of which philosophers have pretended to doubt, or have really doubted: for either, they have meaned on many occasions to exercise their wit, and to triumph in the subtilty of their genius, or they have been transported by over-heated imaginations into a philosophical delirium. The first have perplexed knowledge more than they have improved it: and if the last have not made many converts, whilst they have argued against self-evidence, they have multiplied useless disputes, and mispent much time.

HERE then, at our first setting out in the survey of knowledge, we find an immense field in which we cannot range, no nor so much as enter beyond the out-skirts of it: the rest is impenetrable to us, and affords not a single path to conduct us forward. Could we range in that field, we should be unable to walk in our own. I mean, that if our senses were able to discover to us the inmost constitutions, and the real essences of outward objects, such senses would render us unfit to live, and act in the system to which we belong. If the system was not made for us, who pretend on very weak grounds, I think, to be the final cause of it, we at least were made for the system, and for the part we bear, among terrestrial animals. Other creatures there may be, and I believe readily there are, who have finer senses than men, as well as superior intelligence to apply and improve the ideas they receive by sensation. The inmost constitutions, the real essences of all the bodies that surround them, may lie constantly open to such creatures; or they may be able, which is a greater advantage still, so “ to frame, and shape to “ themselves organs of sensation, as to suit them to their “ present design, and the circumstances of the object they

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“ would confider,” according to that supposition which Mr. LOCKE calls an extravagant conjecture of his, but which that great man might very reasonably make ; since it affumes no more than this, that some other creatures are able to do by their natural constitution, and so as to obtain full and absolute knowledge, what we are able to do by art very imperfectly, and yet so as to attain a greater degree of partial and relative knowledge than our senses, unassisted by art, could communicate to us.

BUT be this as it will, concerning which we can only guess; it is, I think, evident, that altho’ outward objects make impressions on the organs of sense, and may be said therefore to cause sensations, yet these sensations are determined in the whole animal kind that we know, and to which we belong, according to the constitutions of the several species, as these constitutions are framed according to the uses and ends for which each species is designed, and to which it is directed. Innumerable instances might be brought to illustrate, and confirm this truth. It will be sufficient to do so by making a few short observations on our own species alone. The same outward objects then produce the same sensations in all men, as far as self-preservation is immediately concerned : and there is at least an apparent uniformity of sensations in all other cases, sufficient to maintain the commerce of men one with another, to direct their mutual offices without confusion, and to answer all the ends of society. Further than to these purposes, the determination of their sensations does not seem to be in all men the same. The same objects seem to cause different, and opposite sensations in many particular instances, in as much as they give pleasure, and excite desire in one man, whilst they give no pleasure, nor excite any desire, nay whilst they give pain, and provoke aversion in another. All men feel alike the effects of fire that burns,

or of steel that divides their flesh : and my butler, who has tasted both, will not bring me a bottle of wormwood-wine when I ask for a bottle of sack. But yet the Greenlander quaffs his bowl of whale's-grease with as much pleasure as you and I drink our bowl of punch : and if his liquor appears nauseous to us, ours appears so to him. Habit, that second nature, may sometimes account, as well as sickness, for this difference that seems to be in human sensations. But still it will remain true, that this difference, in many and various instances, proceeds from our first nature, if I may say so ; that is, from a difference in the original constitution of those particular bodies in which this apparent difference of sensation is perceivable. The principle of this diversity is as unknown to us as the more general principle of uniformity ; but whether it be laid in the natural constitution, or in the alterations that habit or sickness may produce, our observation will be verified, that human sensations are determined by the actual disposition, whether original or accidental, of human bodies, and cannot therefore help to communicate to us any knowledge of the inward constitutions, or real essences of the bodies which excite them, nor indeed any knowledge but of themselves. To discover in what manner, and by what powers, external action and internal passion co-operate to produce sensation, it is in vain to attempt : and a philosophical mind will be much better employed in admiring and adoring the divine wisdom that appears equally in the diversity, and in the uniformity of our sensations, as it would not be hard to shew if this was a place for those reflections, than in such vain researches. Vain indeed they will appear to be to any man of sense, who considers with attention and without pre-possession, what has been writ on this subject by men of the greatest genius.

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BUT as vain as these researches are, and as impossible as it is to know more of our sensations than that we have them, and that we receive them from outward objects, yet are we not to think the use of our senses as limited, as MALEBRANCHE would have us believe it to be. They were given *, he says, for the preservation of our bodies, and not to teach us truth. The first part of this assertion is agreeable to the system of nature. The latter is agreeable, I think, to no system but that of his own imagining, which is so extravagantly hypothetical in many, and the principal parts, that it has made no great fortune in the world, tho' the utmost subtilty of wit, and all the powers of language are employed to support it. Notwithstanding, therefore, such systems as these, for it is not single of it's kind, we may continue to believe what constant experience dictates to us, that our senses, though few, confined, and fallible, are given not only for the preservation of our bodies, but to let into the human mind the first elements of knowledge, and to assist, and direct the mind in all the progress it makes afterwards.

THAT human knowledge is relative, not absolute, has been said already. We neither do, nor can know the real essence of any one substance in the world, not of our own: and when we talk of the powers, and qualities, and sometimes of the natures of substances, either we talk ignorantly, or we refer to their effects, by which alone we distinguish them, and in which alone we know any thing of them. They who distinguish between the primary, and secondary qualities of substances, do not so much as pretend that the secondary qualities, such as colors, or tastes for instance, are any representations of the outward existences that cause them: and the disputes about
solidity,

* Recherche de la verité, L. I. c. 10.

solidity, extension, and motion which is mobility in action, as mobility is motion in power, shew how inadequate our ideas are of the primary qualities ; tho' these are said to be resemblances of patterns really existing in all bodies whether we perceive them or not.

BUT tho' the knowledge here spoken of be not complete, nor absolute, because our ideas, concerning which alone human knowledge is conversant, are inadequate to the nature of things ; yet is it real knowledge in some degree, and relatively to us. This I mean. Our simple ideas, whose various co-existencies compose all our complex ideas of substances, are certainly adequate in this sense ; they are real effects of real powers, and such as the all-wise Author of nature has ordained these powers to produce in us. I say in us, for it is not incongruous to suppose, nor will these ideas be less adequate, nor this knowledge less real, if it be so that the same powers may be ordained to produce other effects on other creatures of God. This paper gives me the idea that I call white ; it may give some other idea to some other creature. These ideas are different, but they are both adequate to our use, and the knowledge real ; for they are both real, and natural effects of real, corresponding powers.

As low as these principles, of any real knowledge that we can acquire of substances, are laid, it is from them we must take our rise : and there is no wonder therefore if we proceed slowly, and have not been able to proceed far even since the study of nature has been pursued in a right method. Whilst the symbolical physics of pythagoreans and platonists prevailed, and whilst natural philosophy was made to consist in little else than a logical cant, which ARISTOTLE invented, and his disciples propagated, error was cultivated instead of science,

science, ignorance was masked, and men passed for naturalists without any knowledge of nature. The case would be much the same if some modern philosophers could have succeeded in establishing a supposed science that they call metaphysics, to be like an higher ground from which we might descend to physics, from generals to particulars, from speculations about what may be, down to affirmations about what is. But there have been men since the resurrection of letters, at the head of whom our Verulam justly claims his place, who have delivered common sense from the chains of authority, and by exposing antient, have put us on our guard against many of those modern whimsies. The generality of philosophers, therefore, have been far from adopting this inverted rule, this unnatural method of studying nature. They have seen not only that laborious industry is the price imposed on all our acquisitions of knowledge, but that natural knowledge, the knowledge, I should say, of the system of nature, can never be real, unless it be begun, and carried on by the painful drudgery of experiment. Extunditur usu.

By experiments well made, for they too may be made ill, these men have acquired a knowledge of some particular substances, of those at least which are nearest to them, which they can handle, and even torture at their pleasure, and force, if I may say so, to give them information. The knowledge I mean is that of the sensible qualities and powers, co-existing in each particular substance: and this is real knowledge as far as it goes, according to what has been explained above. When a multitude of particular substances are thus known, and thus distinguished, philosophers venture to frame general propositions concerning them, and concerning others too, by the help of analogy: and when the propositions, and the conclusions drawn from them are confirmed by uniform

form experience, they acquire a probability almost equivalent to certainty, and which must be accepted for it. This, however, is not strictly knowledge. The naturalist who has made a thousand experiments, with the utmost care and skill; the chemist who has, in like manner, decomposed a thousand natural, and composed as many artificial bodies, are still liable to be deceived; because it may happen that the action of one particular body shall not produce sometimes the same effects, which the actions of other bodies of the same specific appearance has produced on innumerable trials. Our real knowledge goes no further than particular experiment: and as we attempt to make it general, we make it precarious. The reason is plain. It is a knowledge of particular effects that have no connection, nor dependency one on another, even when they, or more properly the powers that produce them, are united in the same substance: and of these powers considered as causes, and not in their effects, we have no means of attaining any knowledge at all. It may be, that bodies act on one another, according to their bulk, figure, and texture of their solid parts, by motion and pulsion, or gravity and attraction. It may be, that their action proceeds from other causes, so remote from all human conception, that we are unable not only to guess at them, but even to suspect that they are. But whatever they be, since they are neither known nor knowable by us, what have philosophers to do more than to redouble their industry in multiplying experiments, as much as they have means and opportunities of doing, since there may be a deficiency, but never an excess of them? Thus they may proceed in obtaining knowledge of particular substances by the help of their senses, and in improving and applying this knowledge to greater advantage by the help of their intellect. Sense and intellect must conspire in the acquisition of physical knowledge; but the latter must never proceed independently of the former. Ex-

periment is that pillar of fire, which can alone conduct us to the promised land : and they who lose sight of it, lose themselves in the dark wilds of imagination. This many have done from the infancy of philosophy, which has lasted longer than we are apt to imagine ; and which one might be tempted to think, on some occasions, continues still, by a fondness to retain some of the rattles and bawbles of early ages. These rattles and bawbles have been laid aside, however, by no philosophers so much as by those who have applied them to cultivate experimental physics : and therefore as imperfect as our knowledge of nature is, and must be always, yet has it been more advanced within less than two centuries, than it had been in twenty that preceded them.

ALL the helps, that human wit and industry can procure, have been employed. Microscopes and telescopes have been invented. Geometry has been applied to natural philosophy, and algebra to geometry. With all these helps, our knowledge of nature has advanced in degree, but not in kind. There are microscopical corpuscles in bodies, as there are telescopical stars in the heavens, neither of which can be discovered without the help of one, or the other, of these glasses. But with this help, we can no more discover all the corpuscles of any one body, than we can all the stars of the universe : and besides, as to the former, if glasses could magnify enough to expose them all to our sight, we should know indeed more component particles of bodies, but we should remain as ignorant of their mechanical affections, as we now are ; because we should remain ignorant of the mechanical affections of these corpuscles, or of that inward spring which puts these atoms into motion, and directs their several operations.

As to the celestial bodies which are objects of astronomical observation, they must be reckoned objects of natural philosophy likewise; since they are parts of the same universal system of nature. We take up the telescope, indeed, and not the microscope to contemplate them, because they are at such immense distances from us: and we are so little concerned to know of what substances they are composed, or what substances they contain, that if we were not hindered by the utter impossibility, we might be so by the apparent inutility, from attempting to acquire any such knowledge of them, as we labor to acquire of the outward objects that environ us in our own planet. This planet is our home, and it imports us to know as much as we can of the inward structure and furniture of it. We have not the same concern about other habitations. But it is agreeable, and in some respects useful, to know the general face of the country about us. It is probable that mere curiosity begat astronomy: and that the uses, to which this noble science is applicable, were discovered afterwards. I am apt to think, that the first men were excited more to physical researches, by the shining phenomena of the heavens, than by those of the earth. Their wants forced them to look down; but as the most immediate of these were supplied, they began to look up again: and the men who had least to do, Ægyptian, or Chaldean shepherds, perhaps, were the first astronomers. But as mean and rude as the beginnings of it were, astronomy was soon cultivated by the most learned men, and by the greatest princes, if we believe the traditions of antiquity concerning BELUS, ATLAS, and others, to have had any foundation in the truth of things. Thus much is sure, it has been cultivated many thousands of years, and wherever arts and sciences have flourished, this science has flourished at the head of them.

It is lawful, methinks, to conclude from hence, that a science, which it has been the business of learned men in all countries, where learning has flourished, to advance, would have been brought to a great degree of perfection, if there had been any near proportion between the object of it and human means of knowledge. But as some bodies baffle our enquiries, and escape our knowledge by being too minute, these enormous masses do the same by being too remote. Our sense of sight fails us; and when our senses fail us in natural philosophy, whose object is actual not possible existence, our intellect is of little use. It may be said, it will be said, that our knowledge of the heavenly bodies is brought to a great degree of perfection, and is going on daily to a greater, by the incessant labors of many learned men; that we have a much more extensive, a more exact, and a truer view of the phænomena than ever, by the vast advances that have been made in every part of mathematics; that we calculate their magnitudes, measure their distances, determine their figures, describe their orbits, compute the degrees of their velocity, and perform a multitude of other operations concerning them, the result of every one of which is knowledge, with the utmost accuracy. It will be added, that we are not only thus able to account for appearances, but that we penetrate into the physical causes of them, that we discover the forces by which these bodies act on one another, the laws of their motion, and of their direction, by which the order and harmony of the whole system is governed and maintained.

THIS may be said, and more to the same effect, without contradiction on my part; for it is true in the main, truer than panegyric is generally. But still I apprehend, that when we consider the whole matter, as it must be considered to make a

true estimate of the extent of this knowledge, that is, when we compare the objects of this science with the progress that has been made in it, by the united labors of mankind, we shall find much more reason to admire the industry and perseverance of philosophers, than to applaud their success. What do we know beyond our solar system? We know indeed just enough to give us nobler, and more magnificent ideas of the works of God, than ancient philosophy could suggest. We know that this system to which our planet belongs, and beyond which men did not carry their thoughts anciently nor suspect any other, is but a minute part of the immense system of the universe, of the *τὸ πᾶν* as you Greeks, I think, call it. But as to any particular knowledge that we have, or even imagine that we have, it is next to nothing. Well may we be thus ignorant of all the solar systems beyond our own, the very phenomena of which, except the twinkling of some of their suns and our fixed stars, are imperceptible to human sight; when there are so many phenomena in our own solar system, for which we cannot account, and so many others, probably, that we have not yet discovered; when there are, even in that of the earth we inhabit, so many things that have hitherto escaped the utmost penetration of our senses, and the utmost efforts of our intellect, with all the assistance that art can give to both. We cannot trace the course of comets, for instance, thro' all their oblique orbits: but can we trace the circulation of water that falls on our earth in rain, or that rises in springs? "*Veniet tempus,*" says SENECA in the seventh book of his Natural questions, "*quo ista, quæ nunc latent, in lucem dies extrahet; et, longioris ævi diligentia, veniet tempus quo posterì nostri tam aperta nos nescisse mirentur.*" This time may come, perhaps; but if we judge of what is to come, by what is past, we may be tempted to think that the revolution of the platonic year will be complete as soon.

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THE progress of a science, which, like this of natural philosophy, is the work of ages, must be liable, as it has been and will be, to various interruptions. The ground that has been gained will be frequently lost. The latest systems or hypotheses may not be always the truest: and when they are so, the advancement of science may not be accelerated by them as much as it has been retarded by those that were false. In a word, I do not believe that SENECA would be so much surpris'd if he rose from the dead, as we may imagine, at the progress that has been made since his days. What further progress will be made depends on many contingencies, and it is hard to say. But this is sure, that altho' knowledge acquired facilitates the acquisition of more to a certain point, yet the progress we attempt to make beyond that point grows more and more difficult, and becomes a little sooner, or a little later, quite impracticable; for nothing can be truer in physics, as well as in those general reasonings which are called metaphysics, than what MONTAIGNE has said, "*les extremes de notre perquisition tombent toutes en eblouissement.*"

LET US carry these reflections one step further, and we shall have carried them as far as is necessary, to shew how little we are fitted to acquire the knowledge to which we aspire, and which we sometimes pretend that we have, concerning bodies either terrestrial or celestial. To investigate truth with success, in mathematics, in natural philosophy, and indeed on every occasion where it is difficult to be found, the analytic method must be employed not only in the first place, but as far as it can be employed about the objects of our enquiry. It has been much improved, and it has been thus employed, by the moderns. Many of them have been careful to make all the observations and experiments in their power, and from them they have drawn general conclusions by induction. This
now

now is the utmost that our nature, and the nature of things without us, admit to be done : and when it is so well done, that no objection, drawn from experience, can be made to these conclusions, they have a right to be placed in the rank of things known by us. But let us not be mistaken. Tho' this be human, it is not absolute knowledge ; because it is not founded in absolute certainty. Further discoveries of the phænomena may contradict these conclusions : or, supposing no such discoveries to be made, other conclusions may be deducible from the same phænomena, or other causes of them may be assignable, for aught we know. So far is this method of reasoning, from particular observations and experiments to general conclusions by induction, from amounting to real demonstration, tho' it be the best in our power.

THIS is the case when the minds of men are bent solely to the discovery of truth. But something worse happens when human affections and passions mingle in their enquiries, as they often do ; for philosophers are not free from them. The Stoics themselves, with all their boasted apathy, were as little so as any other men. When this happens, philosophers hasten too much from the analytic to the synthetic method, that is, they draw general conclusions from too small a number of particular observations, and experiments : or, without giving themselves even this trouble, they assume causes, and principles before established, as if they were certain truths, and argue from them. Nothing can be more absurd than these proceedings. It is agreed, I think, out of the schools at least, that ARISTOTLE was eminently guilty of them ; for he dealt more in common notions, than experiments, and built a world with categories, that is, by a certain logical arrangement of words : and yet even ARISTOTLE seems to have warned philosophers against this abuse ; for he taught, according to the report of

SEXTUS

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, that they should not neglect sense and seek for reasons, “*posthabito sensu quærere rationem*,” that is, that they should not carry speculation further than experiment and observation authorise it first, and confirm it afterwards. The principal reasons of a contrary conduct may be found in laziness, and vanity; in the first sometimes, in the other always. Philosophers have found it more easy, and more compendious to imagine, than to discover; to guess, than to know. They have taken, therefore, this way to fame, which has been their object, at least, as much as truth: and many a wild hypothesis has passed for a real system.

STRATO was a famous philosopher, the scholar of THEOPHRASTUS, and the master of PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS. As little, and as ill as we are informed of the state of natural philosophy among the more antient naturalists of Greece, such as PYTHAGORAS, ANAXAGORAS, DEMOCRITUS, and others, whose names are preserved though their works are lost, we know enough of PLATO and ARISTOTLE, whose works have been preserved, perhaps more to the detriment than to the advancement of learning, to determine what the state of it was in the days of STRATO. We know that it was no longer the study of nature by observation, and experiment; but that it consisted in a jargon of words, or at best in some vague hypothetical reasonings: and yet STRATO, who could not have told the Ægyptian king how the idea of purple, the color of his robe, was produced, pretended to account for all the phenomena, and among other doctrines, to establish that of the plenum, for he laughed at the vacuum, as well as at the whole atomical system of DEMOCRITUS.

HYPOTHESES are much in the favor of some philosophers; for there have been many STRATOS even among the moderns.

But

But hypotheses may be employed without being abused. In all our attempts to account for the phænomena of nature, there will be something hypothetical necessarily included. The analytic method itself, our surest road to science, does not conduct us further than extreme probability, as it has been observed; and this probability must stand us in lieu of certainty. But when we cannot arrive by this method at such a probability, is it reasonable to make an hypothesis? Is it reasonable, when we cannot draw from observation and experiment, such conclusions as may be safe foundations on which to proceed by the synthetic method in the pursuit of truth, to assume certain principles, as if they were founded in the analytic method, which have been never proved, nor perhaps suggested by the phænomena, in hopes that they may be so afterwards? In a word, when the only clue we have fails us; which is most reasonable, to stop short, or to push forwards without any clue at all into the labyrinth of nature? I make no scruple of deciding in a case, so plain, that it would be a silly affectation of modesty, not modesty, to hesitate. When the phænomena do not point out to us any sufficient reason why, and how a thing is as we discover it to be, nor the efficient cause of it, there is a sufficient reason for stopping short, and confessing our ignorance; but none for seeking, out of the phænomena, this reason, and this cause which we cannot find in them. This is learned ignorance, of which the greatest philosophers have no reason to be ashamed. “*Rationem--- harum gravitatis proprietatum ex phænomenis nondum potui deducere, et hypotheses non fingo,*” said our NEWTON, after having advanced natural knowledge far beyond his contemporaries, on the sure foundations of experiment, and geometry. How preferable is this learned ignorance to that ignorant learning, of which so many others have foolishly boasted? DES CARTES, who mingled so much hypothetical with so

much real knowledge, boasted in a letter to his intimate friend the minime MERSENNE, "that he should think he knew no-
 "thing in natural philosophy, if he was only able to say how
 "things may be, without demonstrating that they cannot be
 "otherwise." LEIBNITZ, who dealt in little else than hypotheses, speaking, in his reply to BAYLE's reflections on his pre-established harmony, of the ridiculous whim of his Monades, and the rest of his metaphysical trash, compares himself to ANTÆUS; asserts that "every objection gives him new
 "strength," and boasts vainly, that he might say without vanity, "*omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum antè peregi.*"

It will be urged, perhaps, as decisive in favor of hypotheses, that they may be of service, and can be of no disservice to us, in our pursuit of knowledge. An hypothesis founded on mere arbitrary assumptions will be a true hypothesis, and therefore of service to philosophy, if it is confirmed by many observations afterwards, and if no one phenomenon stand in opposition to it. An hypothesis that appears inconsistent with the phenomena will be soon demonstrated false, and as soon rejected. This reasoning, which is the sum of all that can be said for them, will not hold good, I think, in either case, enough to countenance the abuse of them, which is made by the very persons who urge this plea in favor of them. That such an hypothesis may be true, is within the bounds of possibility; because it implies no contradiction to suppose that men, who pass their lives in guessing, may guess sometimes right. A man may throw ten sixes with ten dice; but no man in his senses would lay that he did, nor venture his stake on such a chance. In the other case, it is true that an hypothesis inconsistent with the phenomena may be soon demonstrated false. But it is not true that it will be as soon rejected. If philosophers are fond of making hypotheses, their disciples are

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as zealous to defend them. The honor of a whole sect is thought to be engaged, and every individual is piqued that another should shew that to be false, which he has all his life taken to be true; so that notwithstanding all the graces of novelty, a new truth will have much to do to dislodge an old error. Instances of this sort are innumerable. Let us produce one from astronomy itself.

If any hypothesis was ever assumed with a plausible probability, that which we call the ptolemaic was so. The apparent face of the heavens led men to it. We may say, that the phenomena suggested it, and that the revolution of the sun, planets, and stars, in several spheres round the earth, could scarce be doubted of by men who assumed any general conclusions, instead of drawing them all from a long course of particular observations carefully and learnedly made. The plausibility of this false hypothesis, and the authority of the peripatetic-school, established it on the ruins of the true system which PYTHAGORAS had brought long before into Italy from the east and which was probably that of the Egyptian, and Chaldaean astronomers. False as it was, it maintained its credit thirteen or fourteen centuries, if we reckon only from the time of the Alexandrian astronomer PTOLEMY to that of COPERNICUS. Many difficulties had occurred, but as fast as they did so, new assumptions were made to reconcile them, till the whole became one complicated heap of hypothesis upon hypothesis. It was banished at last, and a truer system took its place. The fautors of hypotheses would have us believe, that even the detection of their falshood gives occasion to our improvement in knowledge. But the road to truth does not lie through the precincts of error, and the improvement of astronomy was not owing to the destruction of the ptolemaic hypothesis; but the destruction of this hypothesis was owing to the improve-

ment of astronomy. If this hypothesis had never been made, COPERNICUS would not have had the honor of reviving the pythagorean system, but mankind would have had the benefit of pursuing, without interruption, a system founded on knowledge, instead of pursuing, during an interval of so many centuries, an hypothesis founded on assumption.

To this antient, let us join a modern instance to suggest the same reflections, and confirm the same proofs. The system of DES CARTES dazzled and imposed at first. It was soon attacked however, but it has not been so soon defeated. No man, perhaps, was ever so fit, as this philosopher, to make, and maintain an hypothesis; to assume, and to improve and defend his assumptions. The notion he entertained, and propagated, that there is besides clear ideas, a kind of inward sentiment of evidence, which may be a principle of knowledge, is, I suppose, dangerous in physical enquiries as well as in abstract reasoning. He who departs from the analytic method, to establish general propositions concerning the phenomena on assumptions, and who reasons from these assumptions, afterwards, on inward sentiments of evidence, as they are called, instead of clear and real ideas, lays aside, at once, the only sure guides to knowledge. No wonder then if he wanders from it. This DES CARTES did very widely in his construction of a world, and yet by dint of genius he gave a great air of simplicity and plausibility to his hypothesis, and he knew how to make even geometry subservient to error. It proved in other hands, indeed, the instrument of detecting his errors, and of establishing truer principles of natural philosophy. He furnished to others arms against himself, among the rest to our NEWTON; for tho' the system of the latter be no more owing to the hypothesis of the former, than that of COPERNICUS to that of PTOLEMY, yet was it the application of geometry

geometry to physics, that enabled the british philosopher to make so many admirable discoveries : and the introduction of geometry into physics must be acknowledged due to the french philosopher. To conclude, by bringing this example to our purpose. The plenum of DES CARTES is well nigh destroyed ; many of his laws of motion are shewn to be false ; the mills that served to grind his three elements are demolished : and his fluid matter in which, as in a torrent, the planets were carried round the sun, whilst a similar motion in the particular vortex of every planet impelled all bodies to the center, is vanished. Notwithstanding all this ; how slowly, how unwillingly have many philosophers departed from the cartesian hypothesis ? They have had recourse to the most forced suppositions to defend it ; and when it has been demonstrated false in one of the principal parts, in that of his fluid matter, whose rapid circulation he supposes to cause the fall of bodies, and the motion of the planets, and which he invented to explain these phænomena, we shall be told very gravely, that some fluid matter or other may, however, in some manner or other, be the cause of these phænomena. It is even ridiculous to observe the same men tenacious of an hypothesis neither deduced from the phænomena, nor consistent with them, and averse to receive, or at best extremely scrupulous about receiving, a system built on observation and experiment, not on assumption, and which all the phænomena conspire to establish.

If philosophers meanted nothing more than the discovery of truth, they would confine themselves to those rules by which alone, and to those bounds of enquiry within which alone, we are able to discover it. But a predominant principle of vanity makes them break these rules, and pass these bounds. Not content with philosophical liberty, they affect to proceed licentiously : and it is this affectation that makes them so fond of hypo-

hypotheses, by the means of which, how imperfect soever their knowledge is, their pretended systems are still complete. Thus it has happened that natural philosophers have filled their works with fictions, and, like lying travellers, have given descriptions of countries through which they never passed. They have done even more, they have affected to reveal the secrets of courts they never saw. This I mean; they have not only supposed existences that never existed, but have presumed themselves able to give a sufficient reason for every thing that does exist. LEIBNITZ, who had much knowledge and some sagacity, but too much pretended subtilty and real presumption, imposed this obligation on philosophers, the obligation of adulterating physics with metaphysics. Thus for instance, he thought himself obliged to give a sufficient reason how, and why the extension of body, or body according to the Cartesians, becomes possible; for tho' actuality may, he denied that possibility could proceed from the will of God. He found this reason neither in sensible extension, nor in the insensible atoms that compose body. But he found it happily in his Monades, that is in simple, unextended beings, that are the only substances, and that compose all extension, which God could not have created if he had not created them first. Is it worth while to acquire the name of a great philosopher, at the expence of amusing mankind with such hypothetical extravagancies? Surely not.

SINCE I have ventured to censure DES CARTES on this head, on which he was very liable to censure, I think myself obliged to justify him on another, on which he has been accused very unjustly. STRATO might be an atheist, for what I know, tho' mention is made, in the catalogue of his works preserved by DIOGENES LÆRTIUS, of three books that he wrote concerning the gods. But the passage in the academics of TULLY, where
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it is said, that he did not employ the gods in making the world, "negat operâ deorum se uti ad fabricandum mundum," will not persuade me that he was so. Nothing can be more consistent than to acknowledge a supreme Being, the source of all existence, the first efficient cause of all things, and to account for the phenomena by physical and mechanical causes, by matter and motion. This DES CARTES therefore endeavored, and might endeavor to do without forfeiting the character of a good theist. Philosophers might very reasonably object to his hypothesis, but divines had the less reason to do so; because, besides proving the existence of the self-existent Being by an argument which he thought good, and which has been urged as decisive by MALEBRANCHE and others, the very foundation of his doctrine rests on these principles, that God created matter and that he impressed two motions on the parts of it. But my Lord BACON, a much better apologist than I am, had obviated the objection made to DES CARTES long before this philosopher had writ, in the third book of the augmentation of science: and the passage is so considerable, that I will dwell, with your leave, a little upon it.

THIS great author then was so desirous to keep metaphysicians in countenance, by keeping metaphysics in the rank of sciences, that he resolved at any rate to give them an object. As such he assigned the doctrine of formal causes: and indeed if he had admitted the forms of PLATO, forms entirely abstracted from matter, these would have been imaginary objects in his scheme of some science more sublime than physics. But these he rejects deservedly, as theological speculations that infected and corrupted the whole of PLATO's natural philosophy: so that he left himself no forms to establish as objects of metaphysics, but such as must be discovered, if they are to be discovered,

discovered, by physics ; which he himself admits in effect, when he says, that we may discover them if we turn our eyes to action and use ; that is, to the action and use of substances, whose forms are the species of things ; and which he confirms, I think, by the examples he brings to explain this inexplicable doctrine, or rather unattainable science. In default of this, that the learned chancellor might provide some object for metaphysics, he established the inquisition, or research of final causes as a second. He should not be much concerned, he says, if the order of this research, that he would place among metaphysics, and that has been placed usually among physics, were alone concerned. Now here I venture with fear and trembling, but I must venture, for the love of truth pushes me on, to differ from this great man. The order according to which the doctrine of final causes is confined to the known physical province, instead of being translated to a metaphysical region, appears to me not only useful, but necessary to be preserved, as well to advance real knowledge, as to prevent error, both philosophical and theological. The more we proceed in the study of nature, under the conduct of experimental philosophy, the more discoveries we make and shall make of the infinite wisdom as well as power of it's author. The structure of the parts, the design and harmony of the whole, will be matter of perpetual astonishment, and ought to be a motive to the most devout adoration of that supreme, and incomprehensible Being, of God the maker and the preserver of the universe. I said the harmony and design, as well as the structure ; for besides the admirable contrivance which appears in the bare structure of all the bodies, animal bodies especially, that surround us, as well as of our own, when we contemplate them without any regard to their distinction, wants, or uses, there appears something still more admirable when we contemplate them in these respects. Sometimes

times we can discover neither efficient, nor final cause; sometimes, but more rarely, both. Sometimes we discover the former, and the latter escapes our enquiry. Sometimes again the final cause is more obvious than the efficient, as in one of the instances brought by my lord BACON; for surely this final cause, that eye-lashes were given to shadow and defend the eye, is much more evident than the efficient cause he assigns, or any other, perhaps, that can be assigned. But in all cases where such discoveries are made really, they are made by physical researches. When we proceed in the investigation of them by the help of experimental philosophy, we put ourselves under the conduct of God, who leads us by the knowledge of his works to the knowledge of himself. But when we abandon this method, and pretend by the strength of our intellect to arrive at superior science, we put ourselves under the conduct of imagination, the worst guide a philosopher can chuse, and never so seducing, nor so dangerous as in the brightest genius. This remark is abundantly confirmed in general by the experience of all ages*.

FOR

* It comes into my thoughts to mention, upon this occasion, another opinion, which casts a ridicule on all religion. If we are able to collect any truth from our observations on the mundane system, besides that of a self-existent and intelligent first cause of all things, it is that of final causes. The certainty we have of these makes part of the demonstration of the other, and is the sublimest and most important speculation in which natural philosophy can terminate. I say terminate, because the absurdity of those philosophers, who, in the course of their enquiries, assigned final instead of physical causes, has been already exposed. The abuse which those who profess theology in all religions make of final causes is of another kind, and may serve as a further example of the fantastical and profane notions which men assume hypothetically, when they carry their reasonings about spirit and spiritual things, without regard to what experience might teach them, up to the divine nature and œconomy.

MANKIND, in general, esteem their species to be the final cause of the whole creation, and each society or sect of men is instructed to esteem itself a principal, if not the sole, object of providence. On this foundation even they, who never observed, perhaps, any of the numberless and astonishing instances

FOR these reasons which might be greatly extended and enforced, I cannot subscribe to the partition of science which our famous chancellor makes on this occasion. They, who have no pretensions to be esteemed natural philosophers, profit in their several professions of the discoveries which these philosophers make about efficient causes. Just so divines, or they who call themselves metaphysicians, may profit of those which the same philosophers make about final causes: and when they

of order, contrivance and design, which are obvious in the constitution of things, ascribe, and instruct others to ascribe, every event that is produced, in the ordinary course of nature, to extraordinary interpositions of God's immediate and particular providence, just as they may be strained to suit prejudice, interest, vanity, and passion. I need not bring examples in proof. They will occur to you fast enough, to shew how a doctrine, that should increase our admiration of God's infinite wisdom and power, and enliven all the acts of adoration that we direct to this incomprehensible Being, plunges men by the abuse they make, and a wrong application of it, into error and superstition. It is error proportioned to the comprehension of every mind, and to the vanity of every heart. It prevails, therefore, easily, and spreads from the highest down to the lowest ranks of men. If the ridiculous question, which *SENECA* puts in his book concerning providence, "*nunquid hoc quoque à Deo aliquis exigit, ut bonorum virorum etiam sarcinas servat?*" had been put to your parish clerk, he would have answered, I doubt not, with much holy assurance, in the affirmative, and would have inserted, among his anecdotes, some special examples of wallets, and bundles providentially saved, or recovered. The Stoics are ridiculed, in *TULLY*'s academical questions, for having low notions of the Divinity, and such as supposed among the gods a worker like *MYRMECIDES*, who was famous in his time, as well as one *CALLICRATES*, for making bees, and flies, and ants, and other small insects in ivory. The joke was unjustly applied, as far as it was applied to this general position, that nothing could be without God, "*cupis quidem vos majestatem deducitis,*" says the academician, "*usque ad apium, formicarumque perfectionem: ut etiam inter Deos MYRMECIDES aliquis minutorum opusculorum fabricator fuisse videatur.*" This joke on the Stoics was unphilosophical and silly. But what advantage would this academician have taken over them, if he could have laid to their charge, not only that they made God the immediate author of the least, as well as of the greatest productions in nature, but that they made him the efficient cause of every immoral sentiment and action? He would have had then a large field, indeed, wherein to exult, "*in quo possit exultare oratio.*" But the Stoics, as absurd and as superstitious as many of their opinions were, gave him no such advantage. He must have waited till our age, to have had such a monstrous opinion as this to combat among the professors of theism.

they do so in such a manner as to create, and maintain in the minds of men, a due awe and reverence of the supreme Being, these discoveries will be productive of the best, and noblest effects; far from being barren like virgins consecrated to God, as the chancellor expresses himself, rather prettily than truly. "*Causarum finalium inquisitio sterilis est, et tanquam virgo Deo consecrata nil parit.*" But still there will be as little reason to advance, that the investigation of final causes is a part of metaphysics, or of theology, as there is to say, that the investigation of efficient causes is the object of every profession wherein some knowledge concerning them is employed.

Now, tho' I cannot subscribe to this partition of science, nor think the order in which the research of final causes is placed at all indifferent, yet I subscribe most readily to all that is said in the same place against those who substitute final in lieu of efficient causes. Both are objects, but distinct objects of physics, and nothing can tempt men to confound them but a sort of laziness and vanity. By one they are led to decline some trouble, and by the other to hope to conceal their ignorance. We shall not be at all uncharitable, in assigning such motives to the two philosophers, who have distinguished themselves by this proceeding, in which they have been followed, as in other absurdities, by numbers. PLATO had a luxuriant imagination, and a great flow of words. It cost him, therefore, much less to invent final causes, and to expatiate theologically upon them, than it would have done to pursue the discovery of efficient causes by the slow and painful course of experiments. ARISTOTLE had great subtilty of genius, and the same ambition that made him think, like an Ottoman prince, to use my lord BACON's simile, that he could not reign securely, unless he put all his brethren

to death, made him think too, that he ought at any rate to maintain his pretensions to universal knowledge. For this purpose he perplexed what he could not explain, and in the instance before us he discoursed logically about final causes, to conceal his ignorance of the efficient. I should be unwilling to warrant any fact on the authority of JUSTIN MARTYR, on whom the idlest tales were able to impose; but the bare report that ran in Greece concerning the death of this philosopher, who was said to have drowned himself in the Negropontic current, for shame that he had not discovered the cause of it, may serve to shew, that the character he has at this day, is that which he had in his own age and country. Upon the whole, it may very well be, that DEMOCRITUS and others, whether atheists, or theists, who gave, or seemed to give no place to God, nor intelligence, in the production of the phænomena, nor made any mention by consequence of final causes, but applied themselves wholly to the discovery of material efficient causes, might penetrate, for that very reason, deeper into natural philosophy than they could have done, if they had resorted often to the wisdom and power of God, like PLATO, to those of nature like ARISTOTLE, and to final causes like both. This might be, and my lord BACON who thinks so, and who approved this method of pursuing the study of physics, prepared, therefore, an apology for DES CARTES, long before this philosopher wanted it.

THERE is a passage in PLATO which I shall have occasion to quote, in another place, and to another purpose, where SOCRATES, after reading a treatise of natural philosophy which ANAXAGORAS had writ, sneers at him, and complains, that he who ascribed the structure of the universe to a supreme mind, labored so much in the explanation of material, instead of discoursing about final causes. This passage would

prove beyond dispute, if any proof was wanting, that PLATO introduced, or supported at least by the authority of SOCRATES, the absurd custom of substituting final intentional causes in the place of mechanical and material; and that philosophers, who were as good theists as himself, tho' they did not affect so much theology, pursued the study of nature in the same method as the materialists, tho' they asserted an intelligent first Cause, which the others denied.

THE truth is, that neither these philosophers, nor even the others could proceed in the investigation of material causes, without discovering sometimes the intentional, final causes of things; because the latter are often, tho' not always, so plainly pointed out by the former, that he who does not see them must shut his eyes on purpose. When they are not thus plainly pointed out, it is vain presumption to pretend to account for them: and SOCRATES would have had no reason to complain, if a naturalist, a stranger to Athens, looking at him in his prison, and seeing him fettered and chained, had shewn how it came to pass that he could not walk, and that he could sit, without presuming to determine why he was there.

To conclude and wind up this section; there is no study, after that of morality, which deserves the application of the human mind, so much as that of natural philosophy, and of the arts and sciences which serve to promote it. The will of God, in the constitution of our moral system, is the object of one. His infinite wisdom and power, that are manifested in the natural system of the universe, are the object of the other. One is the immediate concern of every man, and lies therefore within the reach of every man. The other does so too, as far as our immediate wants require, and far enough to excite awe and veneration of a supreme Being in every attentive mind.

mind. But further than this, a knowledge of physical nature is not the immediate and necessary concern of every man; and therefore a further enquiry into it becomes the labor of a few, tho' the fruits of this enquiry be to the advantage of many. Discoveries of use in human life have been sometimes made; but these fruits in general consist chiefly in the gratification of curiosity. Their acquisition, therefore, is painful: and when all that can be gathered are gathered, the crop will be small. Should the human species exist a thousand generations more, and the study of nature be carried on thro' all of them with the same application, a little more particular knowledge of the apparent properties of matter, and of the sensible principles and laws of motion might be acquired: more phænomena might be discovered, and a few more of those links, perhaps, which compose the great immeasurable chain of causes and effects that descends from the throne of God. But human sense, which can alone furnish the materials of this knowledge, continuing the same, the want of ideas, the want of adequate ideas would make it to the last impracticable to penetrate into the great secrets of nature, the real essences of substances, and the primary causes of their action, their passion, and all their operations; so that mankind would cease to be, without having acquired a complete and real knowledge of the world they inhabited, and of the bodies they wore in it.

S E C T. IV.

HAVING now said all that occurs to me at present, concerning our complex ideas of substances, whose archetypes are without us; I proceed to take some further notice than has been yet taken by me, of our other complex ideas and notions which are said to have their archetypes within us, and which
may

may be said, I think, more properly in the same sense to be archetypes themselves. Nor is this the sole difference, by which they are distinguished from the former. Those of substances are received by the mind in it's passive, these are framed by the mind in it's active state. They are framed by the mind as the mind has need of them, and therefore on no subjects so much as on those that regard the thoughts, the opinions, the affections, the passions, and the actions of mankind. The archetypes of our ideas of substances exist whether our minds perceive them or not. These being archetypes themselves, and having no existence out of the mind, have no permanent existence any where, not even in the mind; for there they exist no longer than whilst they are the immediate objects of thought. They cease to exist, when they cease to be perceived. But the mind, having once made them, can recall them into being, and employ them to facilitate the acquisition and communication of knowledge. It is true indeed, and it has been observed already, that nature seems to obtrude, or obtrudes even the complex ideas of modes and relations upon us, as well as those of substances. But still there is a plain difference between the two cases, which must be a little more and more precisely developed, than it has been in the second section. Both are lessons, but different lessons of nature. Sense alone is immediately concerned in one, whether we receive by it the first impressions of outward objects, or whether we correct, and determine the ideas these impressions have given us. But intellect is immediately and principally concerned in the other. Intellect serves in the use and application of ideas acquired by sense, but has no share in framing them. Intellect on the other hand has always an immediate, and principal share, and is sometimes alone employed, in framing our complex ideas and notions of modes and relations. Thus, for instance, to mention a simple as well as a mixed mode; when we observe certain

certain terminations of finite extension, or certain proceedings of men to men, the lesson of nature does not consist in this, that these are patterns by which, and according to which the ideas, or notions we speak of, are framed, without any share taken by the mind except that of perception; but it consists rather in giving hints, if I may say so, which are vague, and neither determined, nor classed, like our ideas of substances; and the mind, taking these hints, frames by the exercise of it's discerning, compounding, and comparing faculties, these ideas or notions. The terminations of extension, that are seen by us, produce ideas, no doubt; but I chuse on this occasion to design them as hints, because they do not so much give, as suggest the ideas which the mind frames by considering these terminations of the extreme parts of extension, both distinctly, and relatively. Confused appearances of this sort strike the senses, but the ideas of particular figures, as well as the general notion of figure, may be framed independently of these sensations by the mind. In like manner, an action which we see performed, as in the case of killing mentioned above, gives an idea no doubt; but this idea, in the respect in which it is considered here, is nothing more than an hint to the mind, that passes from a bare perception of the action to contemplate all the circumstances of it, and all the relations both of the action, and of the actors, and so frames by reflection, without the concurrence of sensation, ideas and notions of another kind, both particular and general. This is the great intellectual province, wherein our minds range with much freedom, and often with exorbitant licence, in the pursuit of real, or imaginary science. We add ideas to ideas, and notions to notions, and by considering the habitudes and relations of all these, we acquire at length such a multitude as astonishes the mind itself, and is both for number and variety inconceivable.

WHEN

WHEN we take such a general view of human knowledge, and represent to ourselves all the objects that our minds pursue, and in the pursuit whereof we pretend not only to reason on less or greater grounds of probability, but most commonly to demonstrate, we are apt to entertain an high opinion, and to make extravagant encomiums of our intellect. But when we enter into a serious and impartial detail concerning this knowledge, and analyse carefully, what the great pretenders to it have given and give us daily for knowledge, we shall be obliged to confess, that the human intellect is rather a rank than a fertile soil, barren without due culture, and apt to shoot up tares and weeds with too much. By such combinations of ideas as I have been mentioning, we shorten and facilitate the operations of our minds, as well as the communication of our thoughts. Our knowledge becomes general, and our intellect seems to be less dependent on sense. From which observations philosophers have entertained false notions of what they call pure intellect, and have flattered themselves that they could extend their knowledge, by the power the mind exercises in framing complex ideas and notions, very far beyond the narrow bounds to which it is limited by simple ideas, over which the mind has not the least original power, and which must therefore, let the mind compose, combine, and abstract them as it pleases (for it cannot make any) determine the extent of our complex ideas and notions.

BUT, besides the limitations imposed on the mind by the human constitution, there is another which we ourselves must impose on it, if we desire to combine our ideas and our notions so as to obtain, by their means, real and useful knowledge. It is the more necessary to insist on this limitation, because philosophers have not only neglected it too much in practice, but endeavored to establish opinions inconsistent with it. Ob-

serve the chain of these opinions. The human mind is a participation of the divine mind, or an emanation from it, or something very analogous to it. The essences of things do not depend on God; for if they did, things might be possible and impossible at the same time according to his will, which implies contradiction. The divine intelligence is the scene of all things possible: but tho' the divine will be the source of actuality, it is not so of possibility. Possibility and impossibility are fixed natures, independent on God. The knowledge of things possible, independently of their existence, is absolute knowledge. The knowledge of things actual, in consequence of their existence, is relative knowledge. The human mind is capable of both. Philosophers may, therefore, contemplate the intelligible natures, the fixed and unalterable essences of things, whether the will of God determines them to actual existence or not. Philosophers may reason therefore not only from their own system, that of actuality; but from God's, that of possibility. These opinions, some of which are nearly true, others of which are absolutely false, and all of which are liable to much abuse, have been advanced: and these, and others of the same kind, are the necessary foundations of the most sublime metaphysics. Let us descend from such imaginary heights; place ourselves on the human level, and consider from thence what this part of human knowledge is, concerning which we are now to speak, and from whence, and how it arises.

It has been observed, in speaking of that part of natural philosophy which contemplates substances, that we must never lose sight of experience, if we aim at acquiring real knowledge. But we may go further, on as good grounds, and affirm, that the same rule must be followed in that other part of natural philosophy (for such it is if it be any thing) which contemplates mind; and in all our general, or abstract reasonings

sonings about moral, or other matters. I am far from saying that we should not reason about things possible, as well as things actual, or that we should exclude every thing hypothetical out of our reasonings. I know too well, that probability is our lot oftener than certainty. But this I say, that we should never reason about the first, except under the direction of the last, and much less in contradiction to the last. God's knowledge precedes all existence. All existence proceeds from his knowledge and his will. He made things actual, because he knew them, and why should I not say because he made them possible? But we poor creatures should not be able to guess at things possible, if we did not take our rise from things actual. Human knowledge is so entirely and solely derived from actual Being, that without actual Being, we should not have even one of those simple ideas whereof all the complex ideas and abstract notions that turn our heads are composed. These complex ideas and abstract notions, to be materials of general and real knowledge, must have a conformity with existence. They must be true, not in an idle metaphysical sense, that they are really what they are; but in this sense, that they are true representations of actual, or of such possible existence, as experience leaves us no room to doubt may become actual.

THAT this is agreeable to the common sense of mankind undebauched with philosophy or superstition, the universal practice of mankind may serve to convince us. The human mind is able to frame many complex ideas and abstract notions, to which no names have been assigned in any language, because they have not been brought into use among any people. Many other complex ideas and abstract notions have names assigned to them in one language, and are in use among one people, and have no such names, nor are in any such

use among another. What shall we say is the reason of such obvious matters of fact? The reason appears to me to be plainly this. Men are determined to frame these complex ideas, and abstract notions, by the want they have of them: and the want they have of them arises from hence, that they observe certain combinations of beings, of actions, of modes, and relations to exist, relatively to which they could neither think, discourse, nor act, all which it is often either their inclination, their interest or their duty to do, unless they applied their minds to the framing of such ideas and notions. Men form, therefore, no where, complex ideas and notions of combinations of this kind, which they have observed to exist no where as in the first case. Nor do they form them always where such combinations do exist; tho' they are not enough observed to have the want of these ideas and notions perceived, as in the second case. These ideas and notions are so necessary to the improvement of knowledge, that as we proceed in acquiring, and communicating it by the employment of some, so the knowledge we acquire makes it necessary in every step we advance to frame, and to employ more, that we may proceed further.

It is reasonable to believe that the first of men had framed no ideas, nor notions of jealousy, envy, anger, malice, treachery, and murder in paradise, nor perhaps out of it, before CAIN slew ABEL. Then, no doubt, he framed all these, and those of assassination and fratricide besides, and invented words to signify them, as he had invented names for all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air, when they passed in review before him. Since the days of ADAM, and his unhappy fall, as the number, and the iniquity of his posterity encreased, so has their experience: and therefore legislators, and the founders of commonwealths, and all those who have civilized and instructed mankind, have been careful to observe the behavior,
and

and the dealings of men with one another in the same, and in different societies. They have remarked the circumstances, and the consequences of every action relatively to the happiness and unhappiness of mankind. Those of one sort have been termed virtues, those of the other vices: and as these virtues and vices have arisen, and have offered themselves to observation, the same persons, political and moral philosophers, have proceeded in determining complex ideas or notions of them, and in marking the several combinations by distinct names, in order to promote the practice of virtue, and to restrain vice by improving the natural functions of rewards and punishments.

Thus then the principles of the law of nature, and of civil jurisprudence have been collected *à posteriori*, by experience and observation: and the same method should be taken in every part of philosophy, tho' I have insisted particularly on this alone. We should not suffer, much less encourage, imagination to rove in the search of truth. To know things as they are, is to know truth. To know them as they may be, is to guess at truth. Judgment and observation guide to one, imagination and speculation to the other. To know them as they are, the mind must be constantly intent to frame it's ideas and notions after that great original, nature; for tho' these ideas and notions are properly and usefully framed by the mind, that they may serve as archetypes by which we reason, and according to which we judge, yet must all the parts of them be taken from nature, and no otherwise put together than nature warrants. As well may the painter copy the features of a face on which he never looks, by pure guess, as the philosopher frame his ideas and notions of nature, physical and moral, by pure intellect. One may draw a metaphysical man, and the other invent a metaphysical hypothesis. But the features of the picture, and the ideas and notions of the system being taken

taken from imaginary not real existence, the picture will be the picture of nobody, and the system the system of nothing. Nay, there is still a worse consequence that follows often, because it is almost unavoidable. Imagination submitted to judgment will never go beyond knowledge founded on experience, or high probability immediately deducible from it. But when imaginations naturally warm, and excited by a strong desire of being distinguished, break loose from this control, tho' the possible man, and the possible system may be so composed as to contain nothing absolutely impossible, yet they may contain something monstrous, like those productions wherein nature deviates from her regular course. Whenever this happens, and it has often happened in philosophy, it must not be deemed a jot less absurd to take these ideas and notions for real archetypes, or the system they compose for a system of real knowledge, than it would be to take such monstrous productions for the archetypes of any species.

THIS proceeding is the more dangerous, because we may accustom our minds to contemplate chimeras till they grow familiar to us, and pass for realities. After which we shall not fail to reason from them, and to control even what is, by what imagination has told us may be. The very reverse should be our practice. All that we imagine may be, should be compared over and over with the things that are : and till such a comparison and analyse has been well and sufficiently made, all argumentation is impertinent. We can frame ideas of a centaur, or an Hipogryph. No contradiction is implied by ranking them among possible beings. We can shew wherein these complex ideas agree and disagree. We can reason, frame propositions, affirm, and deny concerning them ; but yet every man who is not out of his senses will confess, I suppose, that these ideas are fantastical, and that it is, therefore,
absurd

absurd to reason about them. They are phantastical because their supposed archetypes do not exist. The reasoning about them is absurd, because it is absurd to reason about substances that are not actual, tho' they may be possible.

BUT I ask, is it a jot less absurd to frame ideas, and notions, of mixed modes and relations, any otherwise than experience shews us that nature warrants to do. Mr. LOCKE has observed truly, that "mixed modes are made for the most part out of the simple ideas of thinking, and motion, wherein all action is comprehended, and out of that of power from whence we conceive all action to proceed." Now if this be so, is it not evident that mixed modes, how much soever mixed, are resolvable, and should be analysed into ideas less complex, and these ultimately into simple ideas? Is it not evident that whether we consider intellectual, or corporeal agency, whether we frame mixed modes of powers as modifications of thought and motion, or whether we consider them only for want of being able to do more, in the actions they produce, is it not evident that we must have recourse on all these occasions to existence, existence of powers, and actions, or of actions at least?

THE example of power and action, which I employ in speaking of mixed modes, is equally applicable to the case of relations, among which that of cause and effect is one of the most considerable, as it is the relation concerning which the mind of man is the most curious to acquire knowledge. All our ideas of relation are framed by the comparison the mind makes of one idea with another: as these ideas therefore are phantastical, or real, so our ideas of their relations, how justly soever the mind makes the comparison, are in effect phantastical, or real too. The comparison therefore must be not only that of ideas with ideas, but that of ideas with the objects

jects of them, with things. This recourse to existence is so truly the only sure rule by which we can frame our ideas in such a manner as to make them proper materials of real human knowledge at least, that it is, I suppose, a mistake most commonly when we are thought to frame phantastical ideas of relations, by a wrong comparison of real ideas. I suppose we shall find on such occasions, if we observe closely, that the phantastical idea of relation does not arise so much from a wrong comparison of real ideas which the mind contemplates, as from a voluntary or involuntary corruption of the reality of these supposed real ideas.

I SAY voluntary, or involuntary, because philosophers are apt to make complex ideas and notions of all kinds, not only wantonly, but unfairly. These ideas and notions should be composed in order to assist the mind in forming opinions, or acquiring knowledge. But it is obvious to observation, that men begin very often by forming strange opinions, or by taking them on trust; and afterwards put together inconsistent, and inadequate ideas, which they suppose to be both consistent, and adequate, in order to frame such ideas of mixed modes and relations, as may help them to impose, or defend their opinions with some appearance of plausibility. The mind wanders easily; and is easily, more easily led into error about modes and relations, than about substances: and error about the former, may be concealed better, and defended more plausibly by metaphysical chicane, than about the latter. Let us keep our minds, therefore, constantly intent on those criterions which our physical and moral systems hold out to us: and if by surprise, inadvertency, or prepossession we have been led too far from them, let us return to them as to the oracles of truth. For want of doing one or the other, into what extravagant opinions, under the specious names of metaphysical,

or

or theological science, have not men been carried? You give us philosophy in a poetical dress? You adorn, but do not disguise, and much less corrupt the truth. There are who have given us mere poetry in a philosophical dress: and, I think, you must admit that PLATO, MALEBRANCHE, and a good friend of ours, to instance in none of inferior note, are as truly poets as HOMER and you. In a word, the boasted power of framing complex ideas, and abstract notions, will be found, as it is exercised, to be so far from shewing the great force and extent of human intellect, and from raising man up to divinity, that it will shew, on the contrary, how weak and how confined this intellect is, and sink him down, if you will allow me such an expression, into that animality above which he affects so vainly to rise.

THIS now, whereof we have taken some view in several of its branches, is that noble fund of ideas from whence all our intellectual riches are derived. The mind of man does often what princes and states have done. It gives a currency to brass and copper coined in the several philosophical and theological mints, and raises the value of gold and silver above that of their true standard. But the success of this expedient is much alike in both cases. In different sects, as in different states, the imposition passes; but none are the richer for it.

ONE great advantage that has been reaped since the resurrection of letters, and since the improvements of modern philosophy in the study of nature intellectual and corporeal, has been this, that men have discerned their ignorance better than they did in the days of ignorance, and that they have discovered more and more of it, as they have advanced in knowledge. A great part of this discovery is that of the limitation as well as imperfection of our simple and complex ideas and notions. Limited and imperfect they are,

no doubt, and yet it would be well for us if they had no other defect. Another, and, on many occasions, a greater belongs to them ; for, even in the narrow compass to which they extend, they are apt to fluctuate and vary : so that besides the difficulty of determining them well, there is that of preserving the determination of them steadily in our minds. He, who is attentive to do so, must acknowledge the difficulty he finds of this sort even in his private meditations. But the difficulty encreases vastly when he is to communicate these ideas and notions in discourse or writing, and above all if he is obliged to enter the lists of disputation.

OUR complex ideas being assemblages of simple ideas, that have often no other connection except that which the mind gives them, we might be easily led to conceive the difficulty of this task by a bare reflection on the weakness of memory, and if I may say so, on the seeming caprice of this faculty, before we were made sensible of it by repeated experiences. The ideas that are lodged there begin to fade almost as soon as they are framed. They are continually slipping from us, or shifting their forms ; and if the objects that excited some did not often renew them, and if we had not a power to recall others before they are gone too far out of the mind, we should lose our simple, and much more our complex ideas, and all our notions would become confused and obscure. The mind would be little more than a channel through which ideas and notions glided from entity into nonentity. But our case is not so bad. They are often renewed, and we can recall them as often as we please. There is, however, a difference between the renewing of them, and the recalling of them. When ideas are renewed by the same objects that excited them first in the mind, they are renewed such as they were. The light and heat of the sun will cause

the same sensations, and stronger perhaps of the same kind, in the man who has not seen one nor felt the other in many years, than they caused in him formerly. Just so any operation, or affection of the mind, which has been long unperceived, will appear the same it used to appear to our inward sense, when it is perceived a-new by reflection. But when we are forced to recall our complex ideas, the case is not the same, at least when they are such as are not in common use. Those of mixed modes and relations, for instance, that philosophers sometimes employ, and to which the mind scarce ever adverts on other occasions, may well receive some alteration even when they are recalled readily, though this alteration is the less perceptible, perhaps, on account of that very readiness with which they are recalled. But when they are recalled with difficulty, and dragged back slowly, as it were, and by pieces and parcels into the mind, it is no wonder if they receive much greater alteration. They are then in some sort recompounded, and tho' this may be for the better as well as for the worse, yet still they vary, and every variation of them begets some uncertainty and confusion in our reasoning. Thus it must be, when besides our simple ideas, such numberless collections of simple and complex ideas, and such numberless combinations of all these into notions, are to be held together and to be preserved in their order by so weak a mental faculty as that of retention.

NAMES indeed are given to signify all our ideas and all our notions to ourselves and to others, and to help the memory in meditation as well as in discourse. When they are assigned to complex ideas, they are meant as knots according to the very proper image Mr. LOCKE gives of them, to tie each specific bundle of ideas together: and in these respects they are not only useful, but necessary. It happens, however, that

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names, far from having these effects, have such very often as are quite contrary to these. Whilst we retain the names of complex ideas and notions, we imagine that we retain the ideas and notions; but the ideas and notions shift and vary, whilst the names remain the same. The scene of the mind, like a moving picture, must be governed with attention, that it may bring into our view the images we want, and as we want them. Otherwise ideas that are foreign to our actual train of thinking will frequently rush into our thoughts, and become objects of them whether we will or no. But there is another and a greater mischief which will flow from this constitution of the mind, unless the utmost attention be employed, and often when it is. The former is a sort of violence, which cannot be offered unperceived, and may be therefore resisted. This that I am going to mention steals so silently upon us, that we do not perceive it very often even when it has worked its effect. When we recall our ideas and notions, whether this be done with ease or difficulty, we review them in some sort: and if they are more liable to have been altered, we have a better chance for perceiving any alteration that may have been made in the determination of them. But when the ideas and notions we want present themselves, as it were of themselves, to the mind, under their usual names and appearances, we are apt to employ them without examination, and perhaps we advert very often to nothing more than the word by which we are used to signify them. In this manner our ideas and notions become unsteady imperceptibly, and I would not answer that something may not happen to me of this kind, even in writing this essay, tho' I am on my guard against it. How much more must it happen to those who are not thus on their guard?

EVERY

EVERY man imagines that his ideas and notions are his own in every sense, but every man almost deceives himself in this case. When we learn the names of complex ideas and notions, we should accustom the mind to decompose them, as I believe it has been observed already, that we may verify these, and so make them our own, as well as learn to compound others. But very few are at this trouble, and the general turn of education is contrived to keep men from taking it. Bred to think as well as speak by rote, they furnish their minds, as they furnish their houses or cloath their bodies, with the fancies of other men, and according to the mode of the age and country. They pick up their ideas and notions in common conversation, or in their schools. The first are always superficial, and both are commonly false. These are defects in the first determination of our ideas and notions, and if we join to these the obstinacy and negligence that become habitual in most men, we shall find no reason to be surprized that absurd opinions are tenaciously embraced, and wildly and inconsistently defended. Uniformity of ideas in error would have, at least, this advantage: error would be more easily detected and more effectually exploded.

BUT supposing the contrary of all this, supposing our ideas and notions to have been determined truly, and preserved steadily, we must not flatter ourselves, that we are quite secure against the evil consequence that is observed in this place to flow from the imperfect constitution of the human mind. The very temper of the mind, a little too much remissness, or a little too much agitation, affections that are grown up, or passions that are inflamed, may occasion some alteration in our ideas and notions, in the very moment that we employ them. If it be small, it will be unperceived by us. If it be
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great, the affection or passion that caused it will excuse it, perhaps justify it to us. But however small and almost imperceptible, even to a cool mind that is on its guard against its own weakness, such alterations may be, each in itself; yet besides that, each of them may produce others, each of them, tho' small in the idea, or notion, may become of great consequence in the course of that reasoning, wherein this idea or notion is frequently employed, or which turns perhaps upon it. A few ideas, or parts of ideas, that slip out of the bundle of covetousness, make it the bundle of frugality: and a few, added to that of frugality, make it the bundle of covetousness.

THUS it happens when we discourse with ourselves. But when we discourse with others, the difficulty doubles; for besides that of maintaining a steady determination of our own ideas and notions, we have the additional difficulty very often of communicating, and always of maintaining the same steady determination in those of another. This is our case; that of every one in his turn, not only when mixed modes and relations, but in some degree, even when substances are our objects; and I persuade myself that you have been more than once ready to laugh or cry, in the midst of several rational creatures, who talked of things quite different, called them by the same names, and imagined that they talked of the same things. The choirs of birds who whistle and sing, or scream at one another, or the herds of beasts who bleat and lowe, or chatter and roar at one another, have just as much meaning, and communicate it just as well. At least I presume so, for I can affirm of no species but my own. All of them seem to have ideas, and these seem often to be better determined in the birds and beasts, than in men. All of them seem to have, in these loud conversations, some general meaning.

ing. But none of them seem to have that precision, order, and connection of ideas and notions, which can alone make up rational discourse.

SUCH is the common conversation, such the ordinary correspondence of men with one another. Such too for the most part are all the public discourses that are held, and the solemn harangues of the pulpit. But the matter grows still worse when any controversy is concerned. Tho' truth be one, and every necessary truth be obvious enough, yet that there must be various opinions about it among creatures constituted as we are, is as certain as that there are such opinions. Truth however is seldom the object, as reason is seldom the guide; but every man's pride, and every man's interest requires that both should be thought to be on his side. From hence all those disputes, both public and private, which render the state of society a state of warfare, the warfare of tongues, pens and swords. In that of the two first, with which alone we have to do here, disputes become contests for superiority between man and man, and party and party, instead of being what they should be, comparisons of opinions, of facts and reasons; by which means each side goes off with triumph, and every dispute is a drawn battle. This is the ordinary course of controversy, not among the vulgar alone, but among sage philosophers and pious divines, whose conduct is not more edifying than that of the vulgar. Will it be pretended that the schools of religion and learning have, in this respect, any advantage over other public assemblies, over coffee-houses and taverns? If it is, we may safely deny it; because we can easily prove the contrary. In vain will it be urged, that men who have much learning, and who are accustomed to investigate, and to fix the most abstruse and momentous truths, must of course, and even without superior parts, be better able nicely to discern, to determine, and to compare

compare and to connect ideas and notions, than those who neither possess the same learning and the same habits, nor have the same art of reasoning. This may be in some respects true, but upon the whole it is not so: and a plain man would overwhelm the scholar who should hold this language, by shewing, in numerous instances, the weakness of the human mind, that of this very scholar perhaps in some; the narrow confines, and in them the instability of our ideas and notions, the impertinence of logic, the futility of metaphysics, the blasphemy of divinity, and the fraud of disputation.

THE best, and even such as pass for the fairest controversial writers, improve by artifice the natural infirmity of the human mind, and do on purpose what is here lamented as an evil not always to be avoided. They confound ideas, and perplex the significations of their signs, so as may serve best the intention, not of discovering truth, but of having the last word in the dispute. This practice is so common, and especially where favorite interests, and on their accounts favorite tenets, are concerned, that I think no writings of this sort can be produced, wherein it is not employed, more or less, on both sides. How indeed should it be otherwise, when skill in disputation is esteemed a great part of learning, and the most scandalous frauds are applauded under the name of subtilty? Whatever excites men to it, whether pride, or self-interest, or habitual and inveterate prepossession and bigotry, by which they are induced to think, that the worst means may be employed to serve the best cause, which is always the cause they have embraced, it is fraud still. It is pious fraud, if you please: I would rather call it theological; but the doctor who shifts the idea, and keeps the word appropriated to it, that he may serve any purpose, is as arrant a cheat as the saint who interpreted

interpreted the same passage of scripture in different senses, according to the different opinions his orthodoxy required him to oppose. We may lament the imperfections of the human mind; we may blame those who do not give their attention to frame, and to preserve their ideas and notions with all the exactness necessary to make them materials of knowledge, not of error. But we have a right to abominate those who do their utmost to render the discovery of truth impracticable, to perpetuate controversy, and to pervert the use and design of language. I prefer ignorance to such learning, SWIFT's Bagatelle to such philosophy, and the disputes of a club where it does not prevail, to those of an academy or university where it does.

It is, in truth, in those places, and wherever metaphysics and theology have been made sciences, that the arts of controversial legerdemain are practised with most licence, dexterity, and success. Ideas of corporeal substance are not so liable to vary, nor so exposed to perplexity and confusion by the abuse of words, as the ideas that we have, or rather that we suppose we have, of thinking substance. Every complex idea of any corporeal substance is not the same precise collection of simple ideas in every mind. But the most sensible of it's qualities, those that are the most obvious to us according to the business we have with it, such as mark most, and distinguish enough, are put together in every mind. The peasant has not the same idea of gold as the miner, nor the miner as the chemist. This will be said, and it will be so far true, that the chemist will have more ideas of qualities co-existing in this metal than the miner, and the miner more than the peasant. But the collection of simple ideas in the mind of him who has fewest will be ample, and distinct enough to fix the sort there, and to answer all his purposes: and, as long as na-

ture maintains these collections of sensible qualities, the ideas of them can be neither confounded, nor lost. As long as gold, and iron, and men, and horses are in the world, their complex ideas will exist in human minds invariably : and tho' they may be more complex in some than in others, yet the additional ideas that encrease, will not alter the collection enough to beget any material ambiguity.

THE case is widely different when thinking substance becomes the object of our contemplation, when philosophers pretend by a supposed science, not only to spiritualize matter in some sort, if you will allow me to express myself so, and to consider forms abstracted from all matter, incorporeal essences and intelligible natures ; but to reason and dogmatize about immaterial spirits, and to make souls, for instance, as many as they want, souls for the world, for men, for all other animals, and for vegetables, souls rational and irrational, souls immaterial, and souls of so fine a texture, that they approach immateriality, tho' they are material. All such ideas and notions, and all such as are framed concerning them, are ill determined, and consequently ill preserved. Uncertain in their origin, they must needs be unsteady in their progress, and in the use that philosophers and divines make of them. Our ideas of corporeal substances are, no doubt, inadequate and superficial, and such as cannot reach the essence of any one particular substance ; but they reach far enough for our use : and as far as this use is concerned, nay even a little further, the system of corporeal substances lies open to us. They are criterions in our power ; and according to them we verify, correct, and maintain by observation and experience, as we acquire, the precise determinations of our ideas of them. But when we proceed from physics to that which is called metaphysics, and pretend to knowledge of general natures and im-
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material beings, what do we less than pretend to general knowledge, where we are not capable of having even particular knowledge, properly so called? and to particular knowledge, where we have no criterion sufficient to verify, correct, and maintain all the ideas and notions that we put together, in order to compose something that passes for it? The sole criterion we have of immaterial spirit is our own spirit. The idea we have of thought by reflection, is as clear as that we have of extension by sensation. The ideas we have of some few modes of thinking, are as clear as those we have of numberless modes of extension. So far then we have a criterion, by which to judge of the immaterial spirits we are pleased to create. I call them the creatures of metaphysics and theology; because in truth, considered as distinct substances, they are such. All spirits are hypothetical, except the infinite spirit, the father of spirits, the supreme Being. But how confined is this criterion that extends no wider, nor rises any higher than the narrow confines, wherein we have perceptions of the operations of our own minds? They afford much room for imagination, and few means of knowledge. Our ideas of knowledge and power for instance, that arise from the perceptions we have of our own spirits, are applicable to them, and triable by them. But as soon as metaphysicians and divines presume to apply them improperly, to reason concerning the knowledge of the supreme Being on those of the first sort, which have in this application no criterion; and to reason concerning the liberty of man on those of the second sort, without a due regard to what we experience in ourselves, which is their true criterion; how vague, and how unsteady do all these ideas, and these notions we frame by them, become? Of how much incoherent discourse, of how many repugnant opinions has not this absurd manner of philosophizing been productive? In a word, and to conclude this subject

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here at least, all our metaphysical and theological ideas and notions are vague and unsteady as well as phantastical, for the most part, for want of criterions by which it is in our power to try them in the subjects about which we employ them, or for want of trying them by the criterions by which it is in our power to try them.

THESE inconveniences the lovers of truth may easily avoid. We are under no obligation to be metaphysicians or divines. But there is another inconveniency not so easy to be avoided on subjects more important, because more real than those commonly called metaphysical and theological. The inconveniency I mean to speak of here, and have referred to already, consists in the difficulty of preserving steadily some of our ideas and notions when they are well determined, rightly taken from the nature of things, and tried and approved by their proper criterions. Mathematical, as well as moral ideas and notions, are made by the mind: and tho' suggested to it by sensible objects, yet both are properly creatures of the mind, and there they remain to be employed as archetypes. Thus far both are in the same case. But the difference that follows is great in itself, and in it's consequences. The mathematician can call his senses in at every instant to aid his intellect; and by making his ideas become objects of his sight, as he does when he draws diagrams that are copies of them on paper, he not only pursues steadily, but is able to communicate to others, demonstrations which he could neither pursue, nor retain by the strength of his mental faculties alone, nor explain to others by the help of words. Words are signs, not copies of ideas. An idea, a moral idea for instance, may be essentially changed, and the sign that stood for it before may stand for it afterwards, without causing always an immediate perception in the mind of this change. But when-
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ever the least change is made in any idea of which we have before our eyes an outward visible copy, that change is perceived instantly; and the determination of ideas, which the mind is unable to maintain, is thus maintained by one of our senses. Moral ideas and notions, therefore, of which no such copies can be made, which are held together in the mind with the names assigned to them by nothing but the retentive power of the mind, and which can be signified by nothing but sounds that bear no resemblance to them, must fluctuate and vary, beget all the confusion, spread all the obscurity, and give occasion to all the fraud I have mentioned.

DEFINITIONS, it has been said, will prevent, or remedy this evil, and morality may be placed by the help of them "among the sciences capable of demonstration." That the first and great principles of natural religion may be demonstrated, and that ingenuous minds may be trained to make a just application of them in some particular cases, I acknowledge. But that the precise meaning of moral words can be so fixed and maintained, that the congruity or incongruity of the ideas and notions they stand for shall be always discerned, clearly and uniformly, I do not believe. Definitions, therefore, consisting of words, they cannot answer Mr. LOCKE's purpose, as it would not be hard to shew in the very instances he brings. Intellect, the artificer, works lamely without his proper instrument, sense; which is the case when he works on moral ideas. Whenever he can employ this instrument, and as far as it can serve him, which is the case when he works on mathematical ideas, he works securely. I apprehend, therefore, that to expect a new method should be ever found, of preserving as steadily and invariably our moral ideas and notions, as we preserve those that are mathematical, is not very different from expecting that a method should be found, some time or other, of rendering

ing things, that are not objects of sight by nature, visible by art. Ideas and notions of virtue and vice, very clearly defined, have been often confounded by schoolmen and casuists, in the most flagrant cases. They are so still by them and others in most discourses, and in all disputes about political or moral affairs. But no mathematician ever confounded the idea of any triangle with that of a square, nor that of a square with that of a circle.

S E C T. V.

I HAVE dwelled the longer on complex ideas and notions, because tho' simple ideas are truly the first principles of all our knowledge, yet the complex ideas into which they are compounded by nature, and the complex ideas and notions into which we compound them by the operations of our minds, are the more ready and immediate principles on which we endeavor to establish general knowledge. We could not attain it even in such degrees as are proportionable to our wants, and to the design of infinite Wisdom in making us what we are, in placing us where we are, and in giving us the faculties we have, without their assistance. If then these ideas and notions are so limited, as I have described them, by nature, and if we must often limit them still more by judgment, that they may be still more surely productive of real knowledge; if within this extent too they are so liable to be inaccurately framed, unsteadily maintained, and uncertainly communicated, there will result from these considerations sufficient reasons to confound the pride of philosophers, and to expose the vanity of much pretended science. But these reasons acquire still greater force, when we add some further considerations to the former. The lesson of nature, as I have called it, that is the information and instruction we gain by observing the constitution of

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our physical and moral systems, and the state and course of things that exist constantly, or transiently in them, ends with our complex ideas and notions. When nature leaves us, we are forced to put ourselves, in our ulterior progress, towards general knowledge, under the conduct of her mimic, art: so that if our feet are apt to slip, if we totter in the way, and are subject to ramble out of it, whilst nature is our guide, all this must needs happen much more when we have no other guide but art, and when we are reduced to supply natural imperfection by expedients. The truth is, the further we proceed under the conduct of art, the further we attempt to carry our thoughts beyond those originals whereby nature, obtruding on sense complex ideas of what does exist, and suggesting ideas and notions of what may exist, informs and instructs the mind, the more liable we are to fall into error by framing our ideas and notions wrong, by preserving unsteadily even those that we frame right, by presuming that we have ideas when we have really none, or that we know what we mean when we have no meaning at all. Metaphysicians and divines have raised their reputations on little else: and it will be worth our while to examine the truth of this assertion in some few instances, among many that might be produced. I say it will be worth our while, because the errors in opinion, like the faults in conduct of the greatest men, are of the worst consequence, and deserve the most to be detected; because these philosophers, above all other men, have rendered the human mind the flatterer, the deceiver, and the debaucher of itself, "*blanda adulatrix, et quasi lena fui.*" In short, because they have substituted mental artifice in the place of mental art, and have thereby encouraged mankind to continue ridiculously an imaginary progress in search of science, when nature and art are both at a stand.

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How difficult, nay how impracticable the enlargement of knowledge, and communication of our thoughts to one another would be, if we remained absolutely confined to particulars, and unless means were found of supplying this defect, is obvious to reflection. The mind, therefore, makes it's utmost efforts to generalize it's ideas, begins early with such as are most familiar, comes in time to those that are less so, and is never at rest till it has found means of conceiving as well as it can it's ideas collectively, and of signifying them in that manner to others. Complex ideas are made by uniting several simple ideas that have often no connexity, nor relation to each other, except what the mind gives them, in one idea. General ideas, or notions, are attempted by endeavoring to assemble in one a variety of ideas, or notions, that have a relation, or likeness to each other. Nature helps in the first of these operations, as we have observed above; and we perform it, or we may perform it, with success. But she affords us little or no help in the last; and we fail in the attempt. She shews us men, but not man in general, and the same may be said of all other substances. She shews us, or we frame, ideas of particular figures; but neither does she shew us, nor can we frame any idea of figure in general, nor general ideas of particular kinds of figure, any more than we can frame a general idea of substance, or of any particular kinds of substances. Once more, she shews us particular actions, and instances of behavior of men towards men, or we frame ideas in our minds of such particular actions, or instances of behavior, and we term them just, or unjust; but neither does she shew us, nor can we frame any idea of moral or immoral in general, nor any general idea of these particular kinds, just and unjust. The mind would make all these creatures if it could; but not having this natural power, an art is properly, and usefully employed

employed to make particular ideas serve the purposes of general, by giving them the rank of archetypes in the mind, and to make particular notions become general, by comprising them in definitions that we refer to as to archetypes of particular kinds. Thus knowledge, particular by nature, becomes in some degree general by art.

It would be absurd to imagine, as some philosophers have imagined, that nature casts her productions in certain specific moulds. But we may say, when we speak of things as they appear to us, that they are classed in different sorts, which we distinguish by our sensations. Our simple ideas are many, as many as the sensible qualities of outward objects that excite them in us. But the various combinations of these simple into complex ideas of substances are innumerable, and yet each of these combinations is as distinctly and uniformly perceived by us, as the simple ideas contained in it. By this it is, and without this it could not be, that both of them answer God's design, and man's use. If mankind in general did not receive the same impressions, and by these impressions the same sensations from outward objects, much confusion and disorder would arise in human life. Without troubling ourselves to enquire like * MALEBRANCHE, whether the same motions of the fibres are constantly produced by the same objects, or whether the same sensations are constantly produced, and the same ideas excited in the soul by the same motions of the fibres, of all which he knew no more than such ignorant men as you and I are; let us content ourselves to understand this uniformity as it has been explained in the third section, and conformably to experience.

* RECHER. de la Verité, lib. I. c. 13.

THIS being established, we may observe further, that the mind proceeds to generalize, in the utmost extent, the simple ideas it has got, tho' not the complex ideas of substances; as if, the component ideas being generalized, men had perceived there was no need of generalizing the complex ideas compounded of them, and of something whereof they had only an obscure idea suggested to the mind by all their sensations, an idea of substance wherein the sensible qualities producing simple ideas inhered. In the case, therefore, of simple ideas we employ, to speak the language of philosophy, not only concrete but abstract terms, and we say, for instance, not only that milk or snow is white, but we talk of whites in general, and signify them by the abstract term whiteness. The adjective white, joined to a substantive, is the sign of a particular idea, and necessary, therefore, as well as proper to be used in speaking of particular substances, by every one of which it is determined. But the substantive whiteness is authorised by custom alone, and is determined by nothing. It is a term invented by the art of the mind. When it is used, I perceive no determinate, specific, general idea, wherein all the various tints of white which I have perceived, and many there may be which no human eye has ever perceived, are comprehended. I have no perception of a general idea of white abstracted from every particular idea of this sort. The idea I have, when this word is used, is always that of some particular white extension, or of several such whose ideas rush confusedly into the mind together.

IN the case of substances, the art of the mind is not carried quite so far, tho' it makes as we grow up, by observation and experience, some attempts of this kind towards general knowledge. The child who prattled of papa and mama, of crop and tray, advances in years, and talks of man and woman, of
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horse and dog, and soon after of animal. He learns certain common names by which he signifies beings that appear to him alike, and give him nearly the same complex ideas. He learns another common name still more comprehensive, by which he signifies things that do not give him, even nearly, the same complex ideas, but that are confined however to the same class by some peculiar, simple ideas, and contradistinguished by them from every other class more or less. The words man, or animal, raise in his mind no general idea; but in this case, as in the former, some particular idea of man, which the mind can frame without thinking of ALEXANDER, or HENRY, rises there, and becomes representative of all men in general: or else several ideas of men, and other animals, rush confusedly into the mind together; that is, so rapidly, that tho' they are truly successive, yet this succession is imperceptible. Thus far the art of the mind is carried towards a general knowledge of substances, and custom has authorised it no further. The schools indeed invented, among many other words to which they had no clear nor determinate ideas annexed, those of humanity and animality. Now if nothing more had been intended by those words than to signify, by one sound, all that we understand when we speak of the apparent natures of men and animals, such as they appear to our senses, I cannot see that they deserved to be rejected, and I shall make no scruple to use them if the occasion of doing so presents itself. But if they are employed by any profound ontologist, as they were by the schoolmen, who pretended to have such general ideas abstracted from all particulars, ideas of general natures and real essences of substances; they deserve to be rejected as much as the gobbledy and fabledy of PLATO, with which the cynic made himself so merry. Even the general names of simple ideas of sensation can be received, according to my apprehension, in no sense but the former;

and whiteness, if we assumed that we had such a general idea, abstracted from all particulars, and adequate to the real essence of white, would deserve to be exploded as much as humanity and animality. All these words must be confined to their proper use, and not applied to any other signification. In the first case they will be subservient to an art, in the latter to an artifice of the mind,

THE same caution that is to be had, when the mind generalizes its simple and complex ideas of substances, is to be had, and the same distinction is to be made between general and abstract ideas, in the sense in which the latter are supposed by some philosophers to be framed by the mind, when we employ words to signify our ideas of modes and relations. We say, for instance, not only that certain figures are triangular, but we discourse of triangularity. We say not only that such an action is just, but we discourse of justice. We say not only that such things are similar or like, but we discourse of similitude or likeness. We have not however any ideas of such general natures abstracted from all the particular ideas that we suppose to be comprehended in them. These words triangularity, justice, likeness, recall to the mind some particular idea or notion of each sort, or else a confusion of particular ideas or notions, as was said in the case of substances. They excite no other idea nor notion. But yet the difference between the two cases is vast. Our ideas, and notions, of modes and relations, being creatures of the mind, tho' we are unable to frame any that are not particular in their several kinds, and have by consequence in our minds no idea nor notion, abstracted and distinct from all the particular ideas and notions that the mind has framed of every kind; yet the real essence of each particular being the particular idea or notion that the mind has framed, we are able to ascertain

tain by definitions; and to reduce into propositions, a general nature; of which every particular idea or notion does, and must partake, to be of that kind, that is, to be what it is. I do not know, and therefore I cannot define, nor advance propositions concerning substance in general, nor the real essence of any particular substance, nor by consequence the manner in which, and qualities by which they produce the simple and complex ideas I receive from them; nor finally the conformity, if any such there is, between all these ideas and their archetypes. But I know, and can define the real essence of all triangles; which I name triangularity. Tho' I have no idea of triangularity "abstracted with pains" and skill from the several species of triangles, and present "to the mind independently of them;" yet I know that this definition, "a space included by three lines that meet at three angles," contains in it the real essence of every particular triangle whereof I have the idea. A philosopher may take as much pains as he pleases to abstract from those particulars wherein the species differ, and to retain those only wherein they agree, which CUDWORTH calls the cutting off chips, as I remember; tho' he frames, by this method, the definition I have mentioned, yet neither he who framed it, nor his scholar who learned it, will be able, I presume, to consider a "space included by three lines that meet at three angles," without having some particular triangle in his mind. If we had an abstract idea of triangularity, properly so called, it might be said to be the idea of all triangles; but it could not be said, as it has been said, to be the idea of none. In short, we define the general nature of triangles on the consideration of particular triangles: and this definition is a true proposition in abstract consideration, tho' it be not an abstract idea. But to make it of any use, we must descend to particular knowledge again; that is, to particular, real.

real ideas, which might have been pursued, tho' the terms of this definition had never been invented.

THUS again, I know the general nature, the real essence of justice, and am able to define it in very clear propositions, tho' I am not able to frame any general idea or notion of it abstracted from all particulars, and containing them all. It is not, most certainly, to do as we would be done by; for that is more properly a definition of benevolence, than of justice, as every one, who considers the constant force and the occasional injustice of self-love must admit. But it consists in a disposition to give to every one what is his own, where there is property; to deal by others according to the natural fitness or unfitness of things where there is no property, and in other distinct notions, which will altogether amount to a definition, if we may be said to define, when we only enumerate particular notions, and we can do nothing more when we set about to explain the general nature of justice; for which I may appeal to every man who has meditated well on this subject. To conclude; I know the general nature, and the real essence of likeness, and am able to explain it by a very short definition; for it consists in that relation which arises from an uniformity of appearance in things that are distinct in existence. But still I have no general idea nor notion of this relation, abstracted from all my particular ideas of things so related*.

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* THESE disputes about abstraction may be deemed after all, perhaps, to be purely verbal. A loose determination of the word idea may have given occasion to them. A proper distinction between ideas, and notions, may help to reconcile them. These two words are commonly used by inadvertency and habit, or authority, as if they were synonymous. Mr. LOCKE, and even his antagonist in this dispute, the bishop of Cloyne, have used them so. I have done the same in all I have writ to you. But I think that the example before us shews how necessary it is to distinguish them, in order to maintain a philosophical precision of terms.

WHAT advances now do we make in general knowledge by this expedient which the art of the mind has invented? Not such

THE word idea should, I presume, be held to signify one single perception of the mind, whether simple or complex, whether produced by the impressions of outward objects, or by the operations of our own minds, by sensation or reflection. These ideas are preserved in the memory by frequent repetitions of the same impressions, and the same operations. But those of them which can be painted, as it were, on the canvass of the mind, like single objects of internal light, and like pictures of the original impressions which were made on it, or of the original forms which were raised in it, are best preserved and most steadily determined. They are all particular, and have no generality but that of application. They represent to the mind that which does, or may exist. Of that which neither does, nor can exist, we can have no idea. The ideal man, or the ideal horse, which the mind perceives, is a particular idea that represents all the men, and all the horses that exist, or ever did exist; and the ideal triangle is as truly a particular idea that represents all the triangles that exist, or can exist in the mind, or out of it. The mind indeed has a power of varying, without destroying the idea; for instance, it adds wings to the man, and to the horse, one becomes an angel, the other an hypogriff: and as it can represent the ideal man to be white or black, crooked or strait, so it can represent the triangle to be rectangle, oblique, equilateral, equicrural, or scalenon. Thus far the mind can generalize it's ideas, and I think myself sure that mine can generalize them no further. But when we have been accustomed to call every thing an idea, that is an object of the mind in thinking, we fall easily into that confusion of language, whereby men are led very often, as I apprehend that they are in the present case, to dispute, and to mean the same thing. We might avoid it, I presume, if we distinguished between ideas and notions, if we conceived the former to be particular in their nature, and general only by their application, and the latter to be general in their nature, and particular only by their application; in short, if we considered how notions succeed ideas, and how they become the immediate instruments of general knowledge, when these can be such no longer. Particular ideas of actual, or possible existence, are made general in some sort, that is, in their effect, as it has been said, and as it is allowed on all hands. But the power of generalizing ideas is so insufficient, that it goes no further. We make one phantasme of a man stand for all men, and one of an horse for all horses; but here our progress by ideas, that is, by single perceptions of the mind, stops. We have none of humanity, nor of horseity, and much less have we any of animality. Just so the phantasme of a particular triangle stands for every triangle of that species, but we have no idea of triangularity, and much less of figure. We make a particular stand for a general idea in this case, as in the two former; but in no case can we make ideas that are particular, and that can represent only what does, or may exist, become ideas of general natures that cannot exist. There is however a great difference between cases of the former, and
cases

such as philosophers would have believed, but some however. Tho' we cannot by any power of the mind frame ideas of general natures and essences, which neither do nor can exist separately from particulars, yet it is some advance to be able to comprehend, under one consideration, a great number of particulars, by appropriating general names to the several lots, if the term may be allowed me, into which the mind has sorted it's ideas and notions. The expedient facilitates extremely, as every man who thinks must observe, not only the communication of our thoughts to others, but the progress of them in their several trains, and all the operations of the mind about it's ideas; for tho' these general names have no abstract ideas annexed to them, nor, strictly speaking, any ideas or notions, yet are they not unaccompanied by ideas and notions. That would be to have no meaning at all,

cases of the latter kind. The essences of substances are absolutely unknown to us, but the essences of complex modes are perfectly known, so that we have clear and distinct notions, tho' we cannot have clear and distinct ideas, nor indeed any ideas at all of them. From the contemplation of particular triangles we collect a notion of their general nature. We do more; by contemplating the various terminations of finite extension, we collect a notion of the general nature of figure. We have ideas of these no more than we have ideas of humanity or animality, but we know what we mean, and are able to explain our meaning when we speak of these, which we are not when we speak of the others.

MUCH more might be said to shew the difference between complex ideas and notions, and between general and abstract ideas, and the advantage that those (in the conception of which, internal sense, and in the communication of which, external sense help intellect) have over such as are merely objects of intellect. I might expose, even to ridicule, the stir that is made about the pains and skill our masters pretend that they take to form the supposed idea of triangularity, for instance, that they may teach their scholars to know a triangle when they see it; tho' the meanest of their scholars, who have been used to contemplate particular triangles, will have made this notable discovery, "that every triangle is a space comprehended by three lines, and containing three angles," without any help of theirs, or skill or pains of his own. All the merit of our masters seems to be this, they begin to learn at the right, they begin to teach at the wrong end; which is an observation that may be enforced by what Mr. LOCKE himself says about maxims.

all, whereas they have a meaning, a plain and useful meaning or intention. What they have not, they borrow. They create no ideas in the mind, but they give occasion to the mind to collect and apply such ideas and notions as are there already. They call them forth, they marshal them, as it were, and by the manner in which, and by the occasions on which they do so, these names produce all the effect they are designed to produce, and carry us towards general knowledge, as far as our feeble intellect can crawl with their assistance, and much further than we could advance without it.

I THINK I have said nothing here which is not obvious and plain; and yet I have opposed, in almost all I have said, men of the greatest name in philosophy. But when we must oppose them, or belye intuitive knowledge, there is no reason to hesitate. I know that, tho' I can make some abstractions of my ideas, I am utterly unable to make such abstractions as Mr. LOCKE and other great masters of reason have taken it for granted that they could and did make. This I know as intuitively, and as certainly, as I know that I exist. If the difference lay in the degree alone, I should readily acknowledge that other men might abstract better, and further than myself. But I am conscious that there is no such power in my mind in any degree, and therefore I conclude, since we are all made of the same clay, a little coarser or a little finer, that there is no such power in their minds. I conclude, after my lord BACON, that, "since abstract ideas have been introduced, and their dignity exalted with so much confidence and authority, the dreaming part of mankind has in a manner prevailed over the waking." If Mr. LOCKE could dream he had such a power as he describes this of abstracting to be (a power to form with "some pains and skill the general idea of a triangle," for instance, "neither

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“ oblique, nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor
 “ scalenon, but all, and none of these at once *”) let writers
 learn to be less dogmatical, and readers to be less implicit.
 It is undeniable that there is such a thing as philosophical delirium. Men of the coolest tempers, we see, are liable to be seized by it, and when they are so, even their minds are apt to flatter, to deceive, and to debauch themselves. I quote this as an instance of the mind's being debauched, as well as flattered and deceived; for surely it is a sort of debauchery to turn art into artifice: and he does no less, whether he means it or not, who, instead of employing general words for the purposes we have mentioned, vends them for signs of ideas abstracted as no mortal could ever abstract.

SINCE knowledge has encreased, their own knowlege and that of other men, philosophers and divines have been forced to moderate their pretensions. They have fallen a little in the value they had set on human intellect: and I suspect, or rather I would hope, that they must fall a good deal more, how unwilling soever they may be to part with that tinsel, which has passed so long for gold and silver. But there is still a remainder of the old leaven in philosophy. Many opinions that were assumed without any proof, or on the slightest, are still entertained as opinions, or established as doctrines. Among these gross errors there is scarce any more gross, or of more extensive influence, than this that supposes a power in the mind, which the mind has not, and the reality of ideas of general natures, tho' these cannot exist abstractedly from particulars. This error is the great principle on which many fine-spun logical and metaphysical speculations proceed, and from most of which we might be delivered, to the honor of common sense, the improvement of real knowledge, and the advantage of mankind, if it was sufficiently exploded.

exploded. Till it is so, and as long as the leaven of this error among others continues to ferment, men will be apt to mispend their time in search of fantastic knowledge, by the means of imaginary powers. The field of knowledge, which BACON, and DES CARTES, and LOCKE have purged of so many weeds, may be therefore over-run again by a new crop springing from old roots that they neglected to grub, or helped to preserve. Metaphysics may not only maintain, but confirm and enlarge their empire. The lofty madness of PLATO, and the pompous jargon of ARISTOTLE, may be propagated again, with as great success as ever, from those colleges and schools that deserved once the name of venerable bedlams. The learned of another generation may see, perhaps universally, immaterial essences and eternal ideas in the divine mind; they may contemplate substantial forms, and comprehend even the entelechia, whilst they neither see visible, nor feel solid extension. All this may happen, and if dullness should re-establish her empire in poetry, whilst that of madness is restored in philosophy, how glorious an age may the next become, when all the defects, and all the follies of this are complete? Once more, all this may happen. Our learned queen interests herself in nice and subtil disputations about space: from metaphysics she rises to theology. She attends frequently to the controversy, almost fourteen hundred years old, and still carried on with as much warmth, and as little success as ever, about that profound mystery the Trinity. She studies with much application the "analogy of revealed religion to the constitution and course of nature." She understands the whole argument perfectly, and concludes, with the right reverend author, that it is not "so clear a case that there is nothing in revealed religion." Such royal, such lucrative encouragement must needs keep both metaphysics and the sublimest theology in credit; and in short,

"Signs following signs, lead on the mighty year."

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In the mean time, let what has been here said stand for one example of the arts employed by the mind to enlarge it's knowledge, and to let it serve to shew how these arts degenerate into artifice, deceive even the mind that invented them, and, instead of enlarging knowledge, enlarge and multiply error.

ANOTHER example of the same kind it may be proper to consider. HOBBS says somewhere, that words are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools. The observation is just, and the expression happy. Ideas and notions are the money of wise men, and they pay with these; whilst they mark and compute with words, the money of fools. But yet so difficult is the intellectual commerce, so narrow the intellectual fund, that the wisest men are frequently obliged to employ their money like counters, and their counters like money; in one case, however, without loss, in the other without fraud. We may be said to do the first, that is, to employ our money like counters, when we employ ideas of one kind to mark and suggest ideas of another. We employ, as it were, in this case, good and current money of one species, to compute and fix the sum payable in another: and thus guineas may stand in the place of shillings, or shillings serve to represent guineas. This happens whenever we make use of figures, and figures are so interwoven into language, that they make up a great part of our discourse, and a greater than is commonly apprehended.

The figurative stile is peculiarly that of poets, or of the tribe nearest allied to theirs, I mean orators. In this stile the frightened wave returns: or CICERO, in his Philippics, thunders against ANTHONY. To employ this stile with true propriety is hard no doubt. It must needs be hard to keep up an

an exact precision and propriety of ideas and words, when two sets of each are concerned, since it is extremely so to keep them up, when one set of each is alone the business of the mind. It is hard for another reason; because imagination, whose talents are neither precision nor propriety, not the former at least, is employed in the application of one of these sets of ideas and words to the other, and because it rarely happens that great heat of imagination, and great coolness of judgment, that happy association which forms a genius, and appears eminently in all your writings, go together, and keep pace with one another. When they do so, the figurative stile, that some of our neighbors have almost rejected even out of poetry, and that we have abused most licentiously in it, serves to enforce, as well as to explain and adorn, but never to deceive. Somebody has said of the boldest figure in rhetoric, the hyperbole, that it lies without deceiving: and, if I may venture to make a little alteration, in a definition given by my lord BACON, I will say of rhetoric in general, the practice of which I esteem much, the theory little, that it applies images, framed or borrowed by imagination, to ideas and notions which are framed by judgment, so as to warm the affections, to move the passions, and to determine the will; so as to assist nature, not to oppress her.

BUT besides the use which poets make with some profusion, as they have a right to do, and orators make, or should make more sparingly, of this art of the mind, which, transferring ideas from one subject to another, makes that become graceful and reasonable, and thereby useful when the application is judicious, which would be monstrous and absurd, and thereby hurtful without it; there is another use, which the severest philosophical writers may and do make of it in their meditations, as well as in their discourses; an use
that

that if it does not serve to increase, serves most certainly to facilitate and propagate knowledge. They who meditate (for every man, and probably every animal thinks) must have observed, that the mind employs all its forces, and memory and imagination among the rest, not only to form opinions, or to arrive at knowledge, but to set the objects of opinion, or knowledge, in the fullest and clearest light for its own satisfaction, and for the ease of communicating these thoughts to other minds in the same order, and with the same energy as they are contemplated by it. Not only judgment compares in a steady train, ideas and notions that are present to it and those that are intermediate, those that sagacity discovers to help the process of comparing; but memory and the faculty of imagining are employed to bring in adventitious helps. Such they may be called, for tho' foreign ideas divert the attention of the mind, when they break in unsought and by violence, they help it often when they have been sought and are admitted by choice. They lead the mind, indirectly and round about, as it were, in many cases, to such truths, or to such evidence of truth as could not have been attained so easily, nor so fully without them.

MR. LOCKE, in the preface to his famous essay, as he entitled it with great modesty, since it is surely the most complete work of this kind that any language can boast, excuses himself for "dwelling long on the same argument sometimes, and for expressing it different ways, by alledging that some objects had need to be turned on every side; and that when a notion is new, it is not one simple view of it that will gain it admittance into every understanding, or fix it there with a clear and lasting impression--- that our understandings are no less different than our palates;" and more to the same purpose. Now if it be necessary to present our notions to the view of others in
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several lights, and under variety of expressions, I cannot see why they should not be sometimes viewed thro' the medium of figure; nor why the palates of those who relish this stile should not be gratified. Mr. LOCKE gratifies them in this very place, and in most pages of his work. What is the juxta-position of ideas? what is that chain which connects, by intermediate ideas that are the links of it, ideas that are remote, but figurative stile? what else are those dormant, that is, sleeping pictures, which are wakened as it were, and brought into appearance by an act of the mind? what else are the pictures drawn there, but laid in fading colors, or the images calcined to dust by the flames of a fever? His invective therefore, against figurative speech, in his chapter of the abuse of words, must be understood not of the use, but of the abuse of this stile, though it seems to go further, or it will not be agreeable to his own practice, nor to the truth, as I imagine. False eloquence there is, no doubt, and fraudulent eloquence too. Figurative stile often causes one, and is often employed by the other; but there is false and fraudulent reasoning too without eloquence: and we may find as much trifling and fallacy in some of the most dry didactic writings, as can be shewn in those of poets and orators.

RHETORIC may be a powerful instrument of deceit and error, and so may logic too. Both of them are impertinent when they are reduced into arts, and are cultivated and followed as such. But if rhetoric were banished out of the world, and logic with it, eloquence and reason would still remain. Mr. LOCKE says very figuratively, and very eloquently, speaking against figure and eloquence, that they have "like the fair-sex too prevailing beauties, to be spoken against." He could not speak against them out of their language. How should he? We may disaffect eloquence as
much

much as we please, or nature may have saved us this trouble by refusing us the talent, but we must cease to speak if we lay figurative speech wholly aside. Figures are so necessary in the communication, at least, of our thoughts, that they are wove into the very constitution of language, as we have observed already. If we did not chuse, we should be forced to employ them often in common conversation about common objects, and the ordinary affairs of life; and they are still more necessary, when subjects more abstruse and more abstracted from sensible objects are concerned.

God alone knows how nearly external and internal sense, of which we have one common perception, tho' the objects be different, and tho' the latter be occasioned and limited by the former, are allied. All that will ever be said to explain it, will explain no more than all that has been said already. But however, to assert that there is no other source of ideas but sensation, is to assert something most evidently false; for to explain what has been touched already, or hinted at least, we have as determinate, and as clear ideas of thought, as of extension or solidity; of our inward faculties, of their operations, and of the modes of thinking, as of the powers, the actions, and the modifications of mere body. Were it otherwise, we should have no intellectual ideas at all; for ideas, if they cannot be represented in thought without corporeal images, are not such most certainly. But now, tho' corporeal images have nothing to do in framing, they have much to do, and bear a principal part in communicating intellectual ideas. I say a principal part only, for some of these are signified without their help. We say, that we perceive, discern, abstract, compound, or compare our ideas; but we say too, that we think, and that we know. The former expressions, and a multitude of others, are taken from outward and applied figuratively

ratively to inward sensations. The latter, and some few others perhaps, signify immediately, and without any figure, the intellectual idea they are designed to signify.

IF we ask how all this comes to pass, the true answer seems obvious enough. By an art, which experience has suggested to the mind. The ideas of outward objects have their criterions in these objects. Body is the archetype of corporeal ideas, and this criterion therefore is common to all mankind. But intellectual ideas having no sensible, have no such common criterion. He who had first ideas of extension and solidity, and who invented the words, could explain his meaning by appealing to the senses of other men. But he could not communicate his ideas of reflection by the same short and easy method, the passion of his mind in receiving these ideas by sensation, nor the operations of his mind about them afterwards. He borrowed therefore corporeal images to express them, and talked of perceiving, discerning, and so on, in the figurative stile. Thus we may conceive how men came to employ corporeal ideas, for the most part, to explain the intellectual phenomena, and sometimes to assist even their own reflections on them. The art was reasonably invented, and usefully employed. But it soon became artifice, as soon as philosophers took into their heads to affect such science as they are incapable of attaining. Then it was that they employed, among many other expedients, the absurd use of figures that figured no real ideas, nor any thing more than philosophical dreams, and whimsies of overheated brains. The same practice has continued from that time to this, from PLATO down to MALEBRANCHE, from ARISTOTLE down to LEIBNITZ, from PLOTINUS and JAMBLICUS down to AGRIPPA and FLUDD. It begins to grow out of date. Men require now something more real than figure, more precise than allusion, and more particular than

metaphysical abstractions. Philosophers may write as sublimely as they please about pneumatics, or the doctrine of spirits, and as profoundly as they please about ontology, or the doctrine of Being abstracted from all Being. They will be taken up for amusement, like other writers of romance, and be laid aside like them, when any thing more worthy of attention presents itself to the mind.

It is time indeed, that they should be treated in this manner, and that men who betray themselves should impose no longer on others. When I say that they betray themselves, I mean it particularly with regard to the inconsistency of their pretensions and their practice. St. AUSTIN says, somewhere or other, for I quote the passage from the logic of PORT-ROYAL, that “men are so accustomed since the fall to consider corporeal things alone, the images of which come into the brain by the senses, that most of them believe they cannot conceive a thing when they cannot represent it to themselves under a corporeal image.” Such an one, I suppose, was the logician, who for want of enlarging his definition of idea to whatever is an object of the mind in thinking, or for want of supplying this defect by a true definition of notion, which would have been better perhaps, was so absurd, and so profane, as to advance that we conceive God under the image of a venerable old man, because we have no other sensible idea of him. But since the mistaken belief spoken of by St. AUSTIN is owing to custom, and is that of most men only, I would ask why so great a philosopher, and faint, as he was, followed this evil custom, and filled his works with more, and more forced applications of corporeal images to intellectual and divine subjects than any writer, perhaps, of that metaphorising and allegorising age? Shall we say with one of his disciples, who in every other respect, and even in this was his
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equal at least, that “ the soul is become since the fall as if “ it were corporeal by inclination, and that the love it has for “ things sensible diminishes constantly the union, or the relation it has to things intelligible ? ” * But besides that one of these fathers ascribes to a fatal necessity, what the other ascribes only to an ill habit, how can this happen to those extraordinary men, who abstract their souls from every thing material, and wrap themselves up in pure intellect so frequently, altho’ they confess that “ the mind depends in some sort on a portion “ of matter ? ” How can it happen to souls that are “ united “ with the supreme mind immediately, and in a most intimate “ manner, tho’ the distance between them be infinite ? ” †

ORDINARY men may be content to make the most of the commerce they find established in their nature between sense and intellect, to push their enquiries about mind as far, and no further than a few general notions which intuitive observation will justify, and in this process, and in the communication of their intellectual ideas, to avail themselves of corporeal ideas, and to make the little they know of body subservient to the less that they can know of mind. This is enough, no doubt, for vulgar souls confined to material habitations, wherein they feel the weight of an heavy atmosphere, and the malignity of an easterly blast. But it is not enough for those who are raised above the vulgar, metaphysicians by nature, divines by grace, “ all whose ideas are to be found in the efficacious substance of the divinity,” ‡ and into whom “ an “ human soul, and a rational mind were insinuated not to be “ quickened, not to be blessed, not to be illuminated, except “ by the very substance of God.” § These men are more

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* RECHERCHE de la verité, l. 1. c. 13. † Ib. pref. ‡ RECHERCHE de la ver. l. 3. p. 2. c. 6. § Insinuavit nobis Christus animam humanam, et mentem rationalem non vegetari, non beatificari, non illuminari nisi ab ipsâ substantia Dei. Ib. cited from St. AUSTIN in JOAN. trac. 23.

conversant with intelligible than sensible beings, with the intellectual world over which they range, than with the material world whose existence they deny sometimes, and therefore it should seem that it would have been more easy to them to have invented a metaphysical language, than to have continued the use of words already appropriated to ideas as distant as those of real beings from the *entia rationis*, or as those of body from those of spirit. It would have been likewise of extreme benefit to mankind, whom these philosophers take so much generous pains to instruct, if they had been able, by the help of such a language, to set their sublime conceptions in a direct and full light, instead of that indirect and half light which comes reflected from images foreign to them.

I AM ready, therefore, on this account to lament that the attempt of bishop WILKINS, to form such a language, miscarried, and that LEIBNITZ neither finished his alphabet of human thoughts, nor his metaphysical algebra. It may be said perhaps, that these helps, great as they would be, would be such only for the greatest geni, and that we have, therefore, a vast obligation to these philosophers, who make no longer the distinction that their predecessors made of initiated and profane, but deliver the mysteries of their science in vulgar language, with condescension to our gross conceptions, that would never comprehend them if they were kept in their native abstraction, instead of being clothed with ideas that fall under the view of imagination. Just so, it is said, that the sacred authors writ agreeably to all the vulgar notions of the ages and countries in which they lived, out of regard to their ignorance, and to the gross conceptions of the people: as if these authors had not writ for all ages and all countries, or as if truth and error were to be followed like fashions
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where they prevailed. This condescension, then, is very ill placed, and it would have become much better the great men we speak of, to have raised their fellow-creatures up, than to have let themselves down; to have cured us of all our errors, than to have left us in any; and to have abstracted us, or to have taught us plainly the great secret of abstracting ourselves in our meditations from all things sensible, than to have left us immersed in them.

BUT to speak more seriously and more plainly; the truth is, that if these admired masters of reason did not hold the vulgar language, and make up their intellectual schemes of corporeal ideas, they would have nothing to say more than every man, who contemplates his own mind with attention, may know without their help. They are so far from being confined and clogged by the use of the idea they take from body and apply to mind, that it is by their means alone they extend their range and seem to rise. Observe how father MALEBRANCHE sets out in the very first section of his Research of truth. He begins by considering perception and will. One of these is a passive, the other an active power of the mind. We know them intuitively, or the ideas we have of them by reflection are perfectly clear and distinct, so clear and distinct, that definitions and explanations of these, as of all our simple ideas, can only serve to perplex the mind and to render them obscure. To what purpose then did this philosopher descend into a long detail of comparisons between these two faculties of the mind, and two of the properties that belong to matter, that of receiving figures, and that of being determined to various motions? It was not necessary to explain What needed no explanation, but it was necessary to lay, as he did lay with much ingenuity tho' very precariously, some of the foundations of this system.

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THIS is the common practice of metaphysical writers, and what MALEBRANCHE and our BERKELEY have done so plausibly, and so agreeably, that they, who are far from admitting the systems of either, read the writings of both with the utmost pleasure the most heavy philosopher, whose name ever ended in us, pretends to feel. Nor shall we be much surprized at their success, if we consider how the most extravagant poets, such as ARIOSTO for example, who wander continually beyond the bounds of nature, and wherever a lawless fancy leads them, soften sometimes the grossest absurdities under the mask of figures. Struck by these, the mind grows attentive to them, stops its attention there, and rather supposes an application than examines it.

WHEN amusement alone is concerned, and not instruction, this may be pardonable on both sides, in the author and in the reader. But in more serious studies, where one writes to instruct, and the other reads to be instructed, it is pardonable in neither. One rule, therefore, ought to be observed inviolably, the rule I mean of admitting, or rejecting figures as they are justified, or not justified by their application. Their application is their criterion. Metaphysicians and divines, therefore, who have made figures and comparisons of so great consequence by their use of them, should consider that the principal and most proper use of them, is like that of a varnish on a picture. As a painter would be thought mad who should varnish an unpainted canvass, so must they be exposed to this censure, or to one more severe, if it appears at any time that they had no clear and determinate ideas in their minds, concerning intellectual subjects, and spiritual natures and operations, when they employed, under pretence of explaining them, so many others borrowed from the objects of sense. When they have
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really such ideas in their minds, they must remember too that figures and comparisons are varnish still. It must not be used to alter the intellectual picture, it must only serve to give a greater lustre, and to make it better seen. Intellectual ideas and notions, in the mind of the philosopher or divine, should lead them to the invention of figures, and these figures should lead the scholar to these intellectual ideas and notions. When the latter is not so led, easily and almost unavoidably, the figures are improper, or he has a right to conclude that the philosopher or divine had no such ideas nor notions in his mind. Now the first of these proceedings is impertinent, and the second is an arrant fraud. Figures in general, these of speech, and all others that do not typify determinately, are unworthy of rational creatures, how much more of God? and figures that typify nothing, are nothing, or they are worse than nothing; they are so many lies, since they pretend to denote something real, when nothing real exists. How the sight of that brazen serpent, which MOSES erected in the desert, cured the ISRAELITES of the venomous bites of real serpents, I know not. Miraculously, say our divines. Just as other images work cures at this day, say your divines. Be this as it will, the figure typified very determinately what God intended it should typify, when he said, "pone eum pro signo." But when your divines and ours agree to make it a sign of the Christ lifted up on the cross, and crucified, he must be very cabalistical indeed who can discover the same determination. Real serpents had caused a real plague. A brazen serpent was the figure that signified this event to be over. It signified, therefore, at the same time, that the son of God himself was to come into the world near two thousand years afterwards, to deliver mankind from the allegorical plague of sin, which he did not most certainly cause. How reasonable is one, how absurd the other application

tion of this figure? How necessary is it therefore to examine scrupulously the application of every figure, that we may not be imposed on by false appearances? But I will conclude these Reflections by an example taken from figurative speech. It will be thus more close to my purpose, and that it may be the stronger to shew the abuse of figures, it shall be taken from one that has a real, and be contrasted with one that has an imaginary application.

THE word discourse is derived from a Latin verb, which signifies to run about, and by the motion of our legs, and the agitation of our whole body (for when the word was invented all men believed they had bodies) to traverse many different grounds, or the same ground many different ways. Now the application of this corporeal image to what passes in the mind, or to the action of the mind when we meditate on various subjects, or on many distinct parts of the same subject, and when we communicate these thoughts to one another, sometimes with greater, and sometimes with less agitation and rapidity, is obvious. It answers as nearly as such applications can answer, and there is no danger that this figure should communicate a false idea, or fail to produce that which it is designed to produce. There can be neither equivocation, perplexity, nor disappointment in the use of it.

THE word inspiration is derived, like the other, from a Latin verb which signifies to blow in; and it has been said, that “the image might be borrowed to denote an action of God “in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and enlightening the mind of a prophet, or apostle.” How many assumptions are here in one short sentence? and how impossible must it be to come at any thing on which a reasonable mind can rest, whilst figures are explained by other figures that
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want explanation as much? Influencing is a vague term, and may be applied several ways with equal propriety. But exciting and enlightening denote different kinds of action, and neither of them has any relation to inspiration, or blowing in. Here then is metaphor heaped on metaphor, without any true application to an intellectual idea, and we know as little what is meant by inspiration as we did before. I conceive inspiration even less than abstraction. The latter, such as it is represented by most philosophers, appears to me impossible; but I conceive what the supposed operation of the mind signified by this figurative term is, and by conceiving what is meant, or the application of the term, I conceive the apparent impossibility of the thing. But I have no more conception of this supposed action of the divine on the human mind, than I have of the spiration by which the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, according to the decision of the council of FLORENCE that met to reconcile the Greek and Latin churches in the fifteenth century. The doctors of abstraction, therefore, require that we should believe against knowledge, and those of inspiration, that we should be implicit without it. Now this would be a great deal too much, even if we did not know the use that has been made of the supposed natural power of abstraction, and of the supposed supernatural gift of inspiration. But both are sufficiently known, and it is a little too late, and but a little, to impose either on us in the character of philosophers. If we submit to be implicit in another character, and in one of the cases, as far as it is necessary to keep us even now within the pale of the Christian church, we shall do very prudently. But it will be true, however, that the term of inspiration is a figure that gives us no intellectual idea, because it is not really the image of any.

THERE was a time, and it lasted long, when this term was employed in a literal sense. I refer to the time when Heathenish, Jewish, and Christian superstition prevailed separately first, and then unitedly. Ignorance and fear produced superstition, and superstition in its turn maintained ignorance and fear in the minds of men. Thus superstition broached the notion of inspiration, and when the notion was once established, and the fact believed, supposed inspiration served to confirm and authorize superstition. That which has happened in so many other instances, happened in this, a groundless and absurd opinion which grew into vogue in dark ages, and was consecrated by a rude and ignorant people, prevailed in ages more enlightened. Men adopted what they would not have invented, and knowledge seemed to increase for no other reason, or to no other purpose, than to defend, to cultivate and to improve error.

INSPIRATION, which has been since ascribed to a metaphysical cause that metaphysicians cannot explain, was esteemed at first a physical operation that was obvious to the senses. The goats of CORETAS approached a cavern on the hill of PARNASSUS. They fell into strange agitations, and made an unusual noise. The shepherd followed them, and as soon as he came near enough to receive the influence of the subterranean inspiring blast, he began to be agitated like his goats, and to prophecy like them; for we may believe, as reasonably as any part of the story, that the only difference consisted in this, his language was understood, that of his goats was not. On this experience was the Temple built, and the famous oracle established at DELPHI, "commune humani generis oraculum," as LIVY calls it. The PYTHIAN priestess sat on a tripod, lest she should fall into the cavern when her head began

began to turn, and from thence she uttered with prophetic fury the inspirations she received, not from above, but from below. Many other examples might be brought of such physical inspirations, but this one is sufficient for my present purpose; at least it will be fully so when I have added, that they maintained their credit so well, and so long, even among philosophers, that TULLY introduces his brother who was a zealous Stoician, as a person entirely convinced of their reality. So convinced he appears, that when an objection taken from the disrepute into which this oracle began to fall, is opposed to the argument he had drawn from it's universal reputation, QUINTUS thinks it sufficient to answer on this physical principle, that the inspiring virtue of the earth which used to excite and enlighten the mind of the Pythones, might be worn out by age, as rivers have been seen to dry up, or to change their course*.

BUT this was not the sole, tho' it might be the first notion of a divine inspiration. HESIOD, and your HOMER, and others more antient than either, had filled the world with dæmons and genii: and as poets were the philosophers of those ages among the Greeks, the machinery of poetry came soon to be that of philosophy. PLATO, as great a poet as any of them in the garb of a philosopher, multiplied vastly these imaginary beings, and assigned them different ranks and different employments. He made the system of an intellectual world, and, in the respect I am going to mention, as absurdly as many others, but more reverentially toward the supreme Being. He supposed a chain of intermediate beings from man up to God; and it is evident that these beings were in his system the agents of the supreme Being, both in the creation and government

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* — Poteſt viſ illa terræ quæ mentem PYTHIÆ divino afflatu concitabat evanuiſſe vetuſtate, ut quorſdam evanuiſſe amnes aut in alium curſum contortos & deſlexos videmus. De Divin. l. 1.

of the world. He did not raise up man to an immediate communication with God. The distance and the disproportion seemed to him too great. He supposed him influenced, that is excited and restrained, enlightened and inspired, as well as made, by other created beings, by whom this distance was nearly at least filled up, and this disproportion gradually lessened. In his system, therefore, a greater reverence was shewn to the supreme Being than in those of some other theologians, in which God confers familiarly with men, and acts a part, not only in the most important, but in the most trifling scenes of our human farce. But still the absurdity remained of such a gradation of beings. That there is a gradation, I doubt not, upwards, as our senses inform us that there is one downwards. But such a gradation, by which finite approaches nearer and nearer to infinite, is inconceivable. The distance and disproportion will be still infinite.

BUT to return, and to conclude what I shall say about the notions that obtained among the heathens on this subject; for you know that I have reserved to myself a right of following the matter as it rises before me, without observing in these essays, any more than I used to do in our conversation, a just proportion in the members of my discourse. The causes of inspiration then were principally these, an intoxicating wind or vapor that blew into the inspired persons, or the action of dæmons, or genii on their bodies, or in them. Such beings were believed universally to exist; for even DEMOCRITUS, if I mistake not, is said to have admitted them. But they were believed to be material, tho' spiritual and invisible; and whether PLATO thought them all good and beneficent or no, the general opinion, and that even of the latter Platonicians, held that some were good, and some bad, that there were pure and impure spirits. Their cotemporaries, the

the Christian fathers, affirmed that these spirits were all of the latter sort. They attributed the whole secret of oracles rather to the malice of the devil, than to the knavery of the priests. I have read in BASNAGE*, I think, that ORIGEN and CHRYSOSTOM represented the priestess sitting on a tripod over the sacred vent, with her legs wide open to receive the spirit, and that some pretended the oracles were delivered thro' this honourable channel. Nay, that judicious person, the martyr JUSTIN, scrupled not to assure the world, that these devils had carnal enjoyment of girls and boys too, in the very act of inspiration. The general effect of inspiration was madness and fury. Divine madness and divine fury they were called, and the persons, thus inspired, uttered their vaticinations in fits that made the body swell, and become distorted by convulsive motions. In this state, and when they were quite out of their senses, they were consulted by men who thought themselves in theirs, who were often the greatest, and in public opinion the wisest of mankind. TULLY† asks on what authority we are to believe that the madman sees what the wiseman does not see, and that he who loses human sense acquires divine? His brother might have referred him for an answer to the works of his admired philosopher, to that passage in the Phædrus particularly where PLATO recommends, so highly, that divine fury which exerts itself in vaticination, mystery, poetry and love, and where he gives the preference over all other wisdom to that which divine fury infuses.

Now nothing could resemble more a heathen than a jewish vaticination, and no wonder is there, that it should be so. Egypt and the east were the great schools of such philosophy

* Antiq. Judaiques.

† Quid vero habet auctoritatis furor iste, quem divinum vocatis, ut quæ sapiens non videat, ea videat insanus, et is, qui humanos sensus amiserit, divinos assecutus sit? De Div. l. 2.

phy and theology as I have mentioned. They abounded with seers of visions and dreamers of dreams, with prophets and diviners, with wizards and cunning men, with theurgic as well as natural magic, and all the occult sciences. The Greeks borrowed from hence almost all the knowledge, real and imaginary, that they had; and so did the Jews too, as some divines have had the candor to confess, whilst the crowd of them affect to maintain the contrary against irresistible probability, and would persuade us that the whole heathen world was enlightened by the lamp of the tabernacle: as if any similitude of opinions, customs, and rites, which is a good proof in general that the more modern learned of the more antient nation, was equally good to prove that the more antient learned of the more modern, the masters of the slaves, and a people, that had an high opinion of themselves, of a people whom they despised. But however this may have been, the Jews, according to the spirit of the mosaic system, made the supreme Being more frequently an immediate actor in matters of inspiration, as in all other matters, than the heathen did; tho' they too employed the ministry of angels, whose names, at least, they learned first from the Chaldeans, if they did not come first acquainted with these spiritual beings among that people in their captivity.

THIS notion of an immediate action of God on the human mind became more common, and inspiration more metaphysical in the christian schools. Some of the heathen philosophers held opinions that led to this, and might have been improved, so as to derive all inspiration immediately from the supreme Being in some extraordinary manner or other, which they would not have been at a loss to represent, or rather to evade the necessity of representing, by the help of figurative stile. Some of them assumed that the human

soul was drawn out of the divine nature, or was tinctured by it, or had caught it's fire from it. I know not how to express better those strange words, strange I mean in this application, *hausti and delibati*. They assumed further, that the divine mind pervaded and filled all things; and when they assumed thus much, it seemed easy to conclude, from this near relation of the divine and human mind, to an action of the former on the latter, "*cognatione divinorum animorum animos humanos commoveri* *."

PLATO's trinity, as little intelligible as it was, might have been another assumption by which to account more particularly for this divine act of inspiration. The second person, God's intelligence, the word, made men: and what could be more consequential, than to ascribe all particular inspirations to the third person, that universal spirit, that energy of God, which animates and governs the whole? No part of this could have shocked the opinions of those philosophical theists, who acknowledged not only a general providence, but particular providences. As little could it have been thought repugnant to that principle which seemed common to them all, that principle of reverence to the one, the father of Gods and men, whom they conceived to be beyond and before all existence. They could conceive no being, nor manner of being, equal to the Supreme; but neither did the platonic trinity suppose that there was any such: and they might have placed the source of inspiration, according to this theology, much higher than obvious, visible causes, and even than the suggestions of *dæmons* and *genii*, without ascribing it to the first mind, or admitting any mind equal to the first. They had the more reason to do this, and to place inspiration, as it were, out of sight, when the credit of oracles began

* TULLY de Div.

began to fail, and a gross physical account of it would pass no longer.

BUT that which heathen theologers could do, christian theologers could not, after the Nicæan council at least, whatever they did or might have done before it. They ascribed inspiration, indeed, to the Holy Ghost; but the three persons of this trinity making one God only, they ascribed inspiration to an immediate act of the supreme Being, as the Jews had done before them, among whom this act, and the immediate presence of the Deity were said to be manifested often in a sensible manner. Something of this kind obtained at first among the christians. Voices from heaven for instance, and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, would have made inspiration, if these phænomena had continued, as much an object of sense in the christian system, as it had been ever in that of the Jews or of the heathen. But these phænomena did not continue, and tho' signs and wonders were said to be wrought by persons inspired, inspiration became invisible, and the notion of it purely metaphysical; less absurd than former notions perhaps, but more remote too from human comprehension.

THE consequence of all this was, that the proof of inspiration resting on authority and opinion, it became very equivocal. Every sect and every council pretended to it; and, whilst they opposed and damned one another, what one side attributed to inspirations of the Holy Ghost, the other attributed to suggestions of the devil; for in this system the Holy Ghost, that is God himself, is the inspirer and comforter, and the devil, an inferior, a created spirit, and yet a rival to the Father of all spirits, is the tempter and tormentor. How God acts on the human mind to inspire and comfort,
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and the devil to tempt, was then, and is still a metaphysical or theological secret. But the power of tormenting which the devil exercised in those days, was no secret at all. Legions of impure spirits were believed to take often possession of the bodies of men; from whence nothing could drive them but aspersions of holy water, and other forms of ecclesiastical conjuration, performed by priests, that is, by men on whom the imposition of hands had conferred the Holy Ghost in a constant succession from the apostles. This conjuration had been first taught by SOLOMON, as JOSEPHUS asserts in the eighth book of his antiquities, and it continued long in credit, for much the same reasons that oracles and the arts of divination had done so formerly. It is kept in some use still by the roman clergy, and our reformed clergy would not be sorry perhaps to revive this pious practice.

WHILST ignorance and superstition reigned triumphantly, and the fantastical ideas and notions which they communicate, and which authority, education, and habit do in some sort realize in the mind, spread and prevailed; men might be easily persuaded that the spirit, or breath of God, which blew into the face of the first man, and made him a living creature,* might blow likewise on extraordinary occasions, and in an extraordinary manner, into the faces of some of his posterity, as into chosen vessels. They might be easily persuaded, that this breath was not only a principle of life to all, but an influencing, exciting, and enlightening principle to some. They might imagine without any great effort, that the effect of this occasional breath was to fan into a flame the latent sparks of a certain fire that had been kindled in the original

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* *Inspiravit in faciem ejus spiraculum vitæ, et factus est homo in animam viventem*, are the words of MOSES.

constitution of man, and had been extinguished by the fall. They might imagine, that they knew really what all this meant, and on such reasonings, which would have been none of the worst they employed, they might have proved to themselves and others the inspiration of christian saints, to whom sublime mysterious truths were revealed, and of jewish prophets and seers, who foretold future events and recovered stolen goods; for even this, as low as it may seem, was a part of their employment, and one effect of their inspiration.

BUT this reign is well nigh over; or, if it continues in some of these parts of the world, it triumphs universally in none. He who pretends to instruct now must know first, and expect, if he uses any figure, to be called upon to explain his meaning; that is, to shew this meaning without the veil of any figure. Inspiration was long understood in the literal sense of the word, not only whilst men imagined grossly that it was the effect of a subterranean wind or vapor, but when they had spiritualized it a little, and fancied it a breath that came from above, or a spirit that descended on one prophet, and passed from one to another with sensible effects. Since it could be received no longer in the literal sense, philosophers and divines have given up the literal sense, and kept the word that signified something, to serve as a figure that signifies nothing, and that can be translated into nothing but some other figure. Figures and types are indeed the strongest entrenchments of metaphysics and theology: and it is in them that the professors of these reputed sciences defend themselves the best.

AN history of inspiration, like one of divination, would be a collection of such extravagancies and absurdities, as might be sufficient to make our species forfeit the character of reasonable creatures, if it did not shew at the same time
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that by a free use of their reason men have detected, one after another, most of the fallacies, the grossest at least, that had been imposed on them by Heathens, Jews, and Christians, for even of these it cannot be denied. The fautors of inspiration are thus reduced to their last entrenchment; and having abandoned all their other posts as untenable, they endeavor to defend this by not explaining what has been refuted as often as any explanation of it has been attempted. Your friend, ATTERBURY, who knew more of classical learning, and even of divinity, than he did of politics, tho' he affected these the most, has sometimes lamented that any explanations of the real presence in the eucharist had been given, and that the church had made any decisions about it. As long as it was held an inexplicable mystery, it was believed, he said; but as soon as divines had been so unskilful as to attempt to explain it, BERENGER's recantation signified nothing, and it has been a disputed point ever since. If this be a right notion, as I incline to think it is, these two mysteries, that of the real presence, and that of inspiration, have had very different fates. The first set out a mystery, and was piously believed, till attempts to explain it shewed that it implied contradiction. The other set out as a natural phenomenon, and was so far from being thought a real mystery, how much soever it might remain such to the vulgar, that prophecy and divination, the effects of it, were thought attainable by purifications, purgations, and other physical methods, and that they became arts which were taught in the schools by the Heathens and the colleges of the Jews. But the notion of inspiration has ended in mystery where the other began: and this expedient, the only one that can support it at all, would support it effectually, if these ages resembled a little better those wherein the belief of the real presence was first established.

It may be said, that an extraordinary action of God in the human mind, which the word inspiration is now used to denote, is not more inconceivable than the ordinary action of mind on body, and of body on mind ; and I confess that it is not. But yet the cases are so widely different, that no argument can be drawn from one in favor of the other. It is impossible to doubt of an action which is an object of intuitive knowledge, and whereof we are conscious every moment ; and it is impertinent to deny the existence of any phænomenon merely because we cannot account for it. But then this phænomenon must be apparent, and the proof that it exists, or has existed, must be such as no reasonable man can refuse to admit. Otherwise we shall be exposed to make frequently the ridiculous figure that philosophers have sometimes made, when it has been discovered, after they had reasoned long about a thing, that there was no such thing. We must not assume for truth, what can be proved neither *à priori*, nor *à posteriori*. A mystery cannot be proved *à priori*, it would be no mystery if it could : and inspiration is become a mystery, since all we know of it is, that it is an inexplicable action of the divine on the human mind. It would be silly, therefore, to assume it to be true, because God can act mysteriously, that is, in ways unknown to us, on his creature man ; for just so ASGYLL did prove, or might have proved, that men do not die, but are translated, because God can translate them. There is then no possibility of proving inspiration *à priori* ; and the proofs that are brought *à posteriori*, for Christian inspiration, are not more decisive to Christians, than those which the Stoicians brought in favor of vaticination and divination were to them, nor than those which the Mahometans and the worshippers of Foe bring of the same kind are to them.

THIS word inspiration, about which I have said so much more than I intended, belongs properly to you sons of APOLLO; and to you it should be of right restored. Whilst you were at once poets, prophets, philosophers, and divines, and went about from house to house singing, as the Methodists do preaching sublime doctrines, the use of it might be a little confused: and what you assumed in the two first characters, you might ascribe to yourselves and others in the two last. But since they are become distinct professions, as well as characters, and one of them, that of prophets, is extinct, inspiration may have it's place and use in poetry; but no where else. If philosophers and divines employ this word, which signifies a particular and determinate action, as a figure to signify some other action, they employ it improperly. It cannot serve to inform; but it may serve, and it actually does serve, to deceive. Our Quakers, our Methodists, and Enthusiasts of every sort and in every religion, are confirmed, by the received use of this word, in the belief that the spirit of God descends upon them, is inspired into them, excites and enlightens their minds, and enables them by it's powerful operation to utter all the extravagancies, which are in their opinion so many divine truths.

IT is the more reasonable to guard against every thing of this kind; because the hypothesis of some of our finest modern writers on the subject of the human mind, tho' they do not pretend directly to be inspired, seem to renew and improve the reveries, or waking dreams of ancient philosophers, in such a manner as to lay again the foundations of superstition, by supposing an immediate and constant communication between the divine and the human natures. That MALEBRANCHE supposed such a communication, is evident in all his writings: and his Christian and metaphysical meditations are nothing less.

less than a dialogue between the Word and him. The conference was not held indeed in the terms and form of the dialogue; but the language he makes the Word to hold in it, he affirms to be conformable to the answers which he thinks he received when he interrogated the Word on the same subjects.

I HAVE sometimes wondered that divines and metaphysicians, who have borrowed so many fantastical notions from PLATO, have neglected one which they might have found in the apology of SOCRATES, and by which they might have accounted more probably, and more decently than they have done, for divine inspirations, revelations, and communications. They might have learned there to distinguish between the æthereal and elementary body. We may compare the first to a shirt, since the same PLATO compares the second in the phædro to a suit of cloaths, and since it is worn under the other, “*sub manifesto hoc corpore latens.*” Now it was by this medium that SOCRATES was inspired by his dæmon, or guardian angel. He saw visions, and he heard voices, but how? Not by his elementary, but by his æthereal senses. Thus an inferior spirit, and not the supreme Being, is the immediate actor; and inspiration is no longer an unmeaning figure of speech. But this is not enough for metaphysical divines. Our notions of humanity must be raised higher, even at the expence of debasing (for as such it appears to me) our notions of the divinity. God and man must be more intimately joined, tho’ by endeavoring so to join them, they renew, in some sort, the grossest absurdities of paganism.

MANY instances might be produced of this sort, and some very flagrant. I will content myself in this place with the mention of one. BAYLE observes, that the notion of seeing
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all things in the infinite Being, which father MALEBRANCHE advanced on this assumption, that our ideas must be in God, because they cannot be modifications of any created mind, differs little from the doctrine of DEMOCRITUS *, who taught, that the images of objects, which present themselves to our senses, are emanations of God, nay that they are God, and that the idea in our minds is God likewise. The observation is certainly just, and I need not enlarge upon it to shew you that it is so. Instead of that, I will ask you whether the different hypothesis of a philosopher, whom you and I love and honor, has not some, tho' a more remote resemblance to the same doctrine? Both of them at least have, in my opinion, one common tendency, that which I have just now mentioned. If I was perfectly persuaded, as I am very much of the contrary, that we perceive all our ideas in the divine mind, I could account for all that is attributed to inspiration by a figure, that would have a sort of metaphysical meaning. I could represent the soul as a mirror, and it has been so represented, I think, by some, and then suppose, that images received from the presence of God to it, are reflected by it, which would be like the reflected light of the sun, a secondary and fainter, but a divine illumination. Again, could I comprehend that visual language in which "the author of nature constantly speaks to the eyes of all mankind;" I might be able perhaps to comprehend how God may speak to prophets and apostles in visions, or else I might deduce by analogy,

* The words of TULLY are these, "DEMOCRITUS, qui tum imagines earumque circuitus in deorum numero refert: tum illam naturam quæ imagines fundit ac mittat: tum scientiam intelligentiamque." They will be better translated thus. DEMOCRITUS, who places among the gods not only the images of the objects that surround and strike us, but that nature which pours forth and sends these images to us and knowledge and intelligence. COTTA mentions the same notions afterwards, not in the same words as VELLEIUS, but to the same effect. TULLY de Nat. Deor. l. 1.

logy, that as we think we see when we do not really see, but only receive ideas through the eye from an immediate action of God, so prophets and apostles might think that they employed the faculties of their own excited and illuminated minds, and signified their own thoughts by the words they pronounced, when they neither thought nor spoke, but when the breath of God articulated in their organs. I might be able to comprehend such sublime notions, and I should be glad, no doubt, to find how happily these doctrines coincide with that antient opinion, that prophets prophesied often without knowing that they did so. But, I confess, that I comprehend as little our friend's hypothesis as I do that of the father of the oratory; tho' I comprehend very clearly how we may be said in some sort, and in some particular cases, to learn to see; that is, by the ordinary course of experience, and not by any divine agency.

SHALL I own it? I cannot be mortified at my want of comprehension in this case. When philosophers employ clear and determinate ideas, such as are real not fantastical, and when they reason on principles that are evidently true, instead of such as are doubtful at best, I comprehend them without any extreme labor of mind. When they do otherwise, I mispend no time in making unprofitable efforts to comprehend them. COTTA treats the notions of DEMOCRITUS that have been mentioned with the utmost contempt, and even VELLEIUS had entered into no refutation of them. BAYLE thinks a little genius could never form them, and that in order to form them, a man must comprehend the whole extent of power, which belongs to a nature capable of painting in our minds the images of objects. I will imitate in all similar cases the old academician, not the modern sceptic, who

who seems a dogmatist on this occasion. I will follow no man out of the high road of plain common sense. In that, the philosopher may lead me to all real knowledge; for common sense does not exclude uncommon discoveries in the search of truth. But the philosopher goes often out of this road, whilst the illiterate, unthinking crowd of mankind cannot go far in it. These are the two extremes in which men sometimes meet. The difference consists always in their acquisitions and habits, and not always in their natural faculties. The reason of one is not cultivated like that of the other; but the imaginations of both may be apt to warm and transport them alike. Whilst the philosopher consults his reason alone, he will be always far before the other. But if his imagination carries him away, there is a chance that they may meet, and the philosopher with all his knowledge, and all his reason, may have not his own whimsies alone, but those of the most vulgar understandings to support.

S E C T. VI.

HAVING dwelt thus long on one art of the mind that degenerates into artifice, it is time I should proceed to another; and the art to be considered next, is that which was intended when I said, that we are sometimes obliged to pay in counters for want of ready money. What I mean by it is this. We are sometimes obliged in philosophical, as well as in common discourse, to make use of words that have no determinate, nor indeed, properly, any ideas or notions at all annexed to them. I say, we are obliged to do so, in order to distinguish this case from that of metaphysics and theology, which are almost wholly conversant, when they keep within their own bounds, and go neither into physics nor ethics, about

words that have no intelligible meaning, words that have been invented to conceal ignorance, and to create an appearance of science: whereas the words intended here, tho' they have no ideas nor notions, properly speaking, annexed to them, have however a meaning and an use, an intelligible meaning and a good use. Two of them I will produce as examples, and they shall be words that serve to denote unknown causes of known effects. They take their precision, like the names of substances, from sensible effects, and they refer either to an unknown real cause, or to the unknown principle of some apparent cause.

OUR ignorance of causes, our curiosity, and the extravagant opinions of philosophers about them, are equally great. I shall not enter on that subject here at least. Something however must be said about the notion of cause, in order to shew the reason, and even necessity of employing such words as I have mentioned, and to introduce what I propose to say concerning the use and abuse of them. Neglecting, therefore, all the abstract notions that are entertained about cause, the nice and trifling distinctions between the cause and the sufficient reason of any thing, and the other distinctions, as well as divisions, and subdivisions that have been made, and that serve, for the most part, to no other purpose than to perplex us in a labyrinth of words, let us content ourselves to understand when we speak of cause in general, "That, by the immediate, or remote, the physical, or moral virtue whereof any thing is what it is, or any thing is done as it is done."

THE supreme Being is the first, and, strictly, the sole efficient cause. But as we know nothing of his manner of being, so we know nothing of his manner of causing. In your HOMER's machinery the gods are perpetually actors, but the

poet neither employs them so much, nor more improperly, nor more unworthily than philosophers and divines have presumed to employ the Deity. Let us think with greater reverence of God, and whilst we acknowledge him to be the first, let us not imagine him to be the immediate cause of every phenomenon and every thing that happens. Through how many mediums, if I may say so, may not the rays of divine efficacy pass before they arrive at us! Far be it from me to neglect or to discourage the contemplation of the first efficient cause who shines so gloriously in all his works. But let us adore him in the contemplation of his works, and of the order of second causes by which the system of them is maintained, and carried on. Second causes cannot be reckoned in a strict philosophical sense efficient, when they are considered relatively to the whole extent of being, at the head of which is God. But as they have a communicated efficiency in such degrees, of such kinds, and under such directions as it is communicated to them by infinite wisdom and power, they appear efficient when they are considered relatively to us, and to our system: and since all our knowledge is in truth relative to these, we may be well content to admit ideas that are so too, and that reach no further. These are our limits, and where our experimental knowledge of second causes stops, there our physical enquiries should stop. All beyond is metaphysical jargon; for at what point soever we leave physics for metaphysics, we fall of course into jargon. The antients generally set out in it. The moderns too often conclude in it.

THE first example I shall produce of words that serve to denote unknown causes of known effects, shall be the word chance. Every event that happens in the course of human affairs, how contingent soever it may seem, has a real and peculiar cause. But when these causes are too remote, or too complicated, to be easily or at all discerned by us, we call

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the event contingent, and the cause chance. Thus we endeavor to supply our want of ideas, to think with less confusion, to discourse more intelligibly, and to make up the sum with counters which we cannot make up with money. But in this kind of payment there has been much abuse, and much deceit. Superstition attempted to make these counters pass for real money; and, instead of keeping the word chance to signify in it's application nothing more than this, that the cause of an event was unknown, to make it pass for an actual cause and a positive Being. Superstition impersonated it under the name of fortune; and this chimerical divinity was supposed to direct arbitrarily all the events whose causes were not apparent, or which exceeded in good or ill the expectations of men. The heathens accounted by it for past events, consulted it about future, and referred themselves to it in doubtful cases.

It is strange that such superstitions, instead of being confined to the heathen world, should have been as prevalent among God's chosen people, both Jews and Christians, and should be scarce exploded at this hour. It is stranger still that a recourse to the decision of chance should be expressly commanded in the Old Testament, and occasionally countenanced in the New, even on so important an occasion as the election of an apostle in the place of JUDAS ISCARIOT. Yet so it is; and from hence we may believe it happened that some even of the most puerile and absurd appeals to chance, if one can be more so than another, were long preserved among Christians, and by them applied most profanely and cruelly. Many different Sortes or chances were consulted by the heathens. Those of Præneste, where FORTUNE had a temple adorned with mosaic work by SYLLA, who trusted much to the goddess, and took the name of FOELIX, on account of his success which he ascribed to her, were extremely famous. I do

not remember how these consultations were made; but those that had the name of *Sortes Homericæ*, and *Sortes Virgilianæ*, were made by dipping at random on some passage in the poems of HOMER and VIRGIL, and the superstition was sure to be confirmed whenever, as it could not but happen often, future events seemed in any degree to have been figured in these passages. An odd instance of this which is preserved in a tradition derived, I think, from Mr. COWLEY, I may mention as I go along. This poet and some other persons, attached to CHARLES the first, were with him in the isle of Wight, where CROMWELL kept him in prison till he brought him to the block. Their amusement, for it could be nothing more, was to try the *Sortes Virgilianæ*; and in trying them it is reported, that the unfortunate prince dipped on those terrible imprecations that DIDO makes against ÆNEAS and his posterity, in the fourth book of the *Æneid*.

I SAID that these superstitious usages have been applied profanely and cruelly, by Christians: and I was in the right to say so. What could be more profane than the practice of opening the sacred books, in order to take from the first passage that occurred a prognostic of events, and to degrade them to the same silly use that the Heathens made of their poems? What could be more cruel than the custom of deciding causes criminal and civil too, by duels, which was introduced by the barbarous northern nations; and was, notwithstanding the declarations of some popes against it, so far approved by the church, that it was followed on many occasions in ecclesiastical controversies, and that it was accompanied on all occasions with much ecclesiastical ceremony, even so far that a priest blessed in the field the weapons of the champions? This trial, like that of passing blindfold over red-hot ploughshares, and others, were appeals to chance as to a judge: and both

both these appeals, and the consultations of chance about future events, were founded on a theological axiom invented to excuse them on one hand, and to create more reverence for them on the other, that God presides over chance, and directs it by interpositions of his providence; so that to interrogate chance was to interrogate God, and the decisions of chance were the decisions of God.

To apply the word chance in this manner, was absurd enough. But what shall we say of those philosophers who ascribed the creation of the world to chance. Superstition perverted this innocent art of the mind: and a word, that signified no determinate cause at all, was made to signify a superior Being who governs the affairs of the world, and to whose agency those events were to be ascribed that could not be accounted for otherwise. Philosophy, the philosophy of men who affected to put superstition under their feet, and to account by physical researches for all the phænomena, attributed the original of all things to chance. By this proceeding the Epicureans did not endeavor to screen their ignorance, but they pretended to shew their knowledge of causes. They erected chance into a first physical cause, and derived the production of the universe from it. They assumed a chaos of innumerable heterogeneous particles, endowed with essential activity, and with whatever else was necessary for their purpose, like the declination of these atoms; after which they concluded that such a number of entities in perpetual motion and action one on another, must pass sooner or later through all possible combinations. From hence they concluded again, that the formation of the world was caused by a certain concurrence, or combination of atoms, without the unnecessary help of a directing mind; and that this concurrence being fortuitous, the world was made by chance. But enough
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has been said of the use and abuse of this word. It is time to speak of those that have been made of the word force.

SINCE even ALCIPHON the minute philosopher could frame no precise idea of force, though he "shut his eyes to assist his meditation," it might well be asked how it comes to pass, that there are so many refined subtilties and nice distinctions about this same force? Ingenious and learned men might have employed their time much better most certainly, than they have done about "subtil abstracts, spiritual quint-essences, un certo che and un non so che." I am sorry to have this proof the more of the folly and affectation of philosophers. But I am not at all at a loss to account for them, nor to shew from whence the difference arises between these visionaries, and those great men who have discoursed rationally about force. The difference arises plainly from hence. The former have abused this art of the mind, and supposed, or reasoned as if they supposed, that this word signified what common sense never meant to signify by it. The others have not turned art into artifice in this manner, but have reasoned about force as about the unknown cause of sensible effects, or the unknown causality of apparent causes. It may seem strange perhaps to our first thoughts, that men should talk sense, for it will never seem strange that they should talk nonsense, about something whereof they have no ideas. But the reason why they do so in the instance before us, will appear to our second thoughts extremely plain. That it may appear so the more, and that we may shew the better how industrious the mind is to help its natural infirmities by art in the conceptions and expressions of things, let me add a few reflections to what has been already observed.

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WITHOUT meaning what those philosophers meant who screened so much ignorance behind the notions they endeavored to establish of occult qualities and occult causes, we may say that the causality of apparent causes, and therefore the first efficient causes in the order of second causes will be always occult, whatever hypothesis or system we follow. The peripatetics and schoolmen imagined the qualities of substances, as they were and are still called, and which are supposed to excite ideas immediately by their immediate action on our organs, and mediately by their action on other bodies, to be real entities derived from substantial forms, inherent in substances some how or other ; but distinct from them, and added to them. Modern philosophers, more intelligibly and more conformably to experience, have banished all these notions of qualities distinct from body, and have taught us that the action of body on body is produced exclusively of them by the inward constitution of body itself, and is varied according to the divers constitutions of the bodies that are at any time passive, and the different states they are in. This opinion leads us on to observe the mechanism of body, the laws of motion, and whatever else makes any part of physical enquiry. The other is founded in abstract general notions, which the knowledge of particulars had little share in framing, and points up to the chimeras of imagination. But still, even the best of them stops short of the real essences of substances, shews us more causes, but shews us as little the principles of their causality.

ALTHO' the system of philosophy be in this respect totally changed, yet the mind has found it convenient to preserve the notion of sensible qualities. They were thought real, and referred to substances as inherent specifically in them.

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They are conceived now to be qualities by imputation only, and refer to the manner in which our senses are affected. We cannot say with strict propriety, this clock has several sensible qualities, though it marks the days of the month to our sight alone, and the hours and the minutes to our eyes and to our ears. We know that there are no such distinct qualities in the clock, and that all these effects are produced by one spring, governed and producing effects according to its own temper, according to laws and directions resulting from the structure of the whole machine, and according to the texture and state of the organs of those to whom it is visible, or audible. Just so we cannot say with strict propriety, that snow is cold by a cold quality, any more than white by a white quality; or that fire is hot by a hot quality. They excite ideas that we distinguish and mark by these words; but they contain nothing in them that resembles these ideas. By the perceptions we have of these ideas, we mark, under the name of qualities, the divers effects of the unknown essences of substances.

THIS modern expedient (for the mind invents expedients as fast as it finds the want of them in the improvement, or more easy improvement of knowledge) is the more reasonably employed on another account. Though there are no such distinct specific qualities in bodies as were assumed by philosophers, yet the particles which compose bodies are often heterogeneous, as they appear by sure experiments; among other instances in that of light, and in the production of colors. Now this heterogeneity, which is thought to consist in the different sizes of the particles, and which may consist in other differences undiscoverable by us, continuing the same, and each kind acting and being acted upon according to its kind, this amounts in some manner to a notion of qualities contained in bodies; and being so conceived, the mind knows no more in-

deed of the real constitutions of bodies than it knew before, but proceeds in this hypothetical manner a little better and with greater clearness and precision in the pursuit of physical enquiries. These enquiries thus assisted enable us to analyze the component particles of bodies in their effects, and to discover in them too some general laws by which the action of these component particles separately and collectively is directed. This is some knowledge, and has the appearance of being greater than it is. But there is something still behind, concerning which we cannot boast even the least appearance of knowledge. Body acts on body by contact and pulsion. This is certain, though it be not so certain that body can act no other way, as philosophers generally assume. But even this pulsion is caused by motion, as motion is caused by pulsion; so that we get thus into a circle, and may go eternally round in the dark, without being nearer to discover what it is that puts mobility, that essential property of matter or body, into action, unless we suppose that the motion impressed originally continues still without any diminution. Who can doubt that there is attraction or gravitation and repulsion in body, as well as pulsion? Who can withhold his admiration from those discoveries that modern philosophy has made concerning the laws of motion, the properties of bodies that become apparent by them, and the actions of bodies on bodies that follow according to them? But who can or will ever be able to say what the springs of corporeal nature are, without which there could be neither action nor motion? What is that spring, for instance, which emits from the body of the sun innumerable particles of light, that make their passage of fifty millions of miles to our earth in seven minutes of time, or thereabouts, with a velocity inconceivable though demonstrated? Well may the cause be incomprehensible, when the effect passes comprehension.

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HERE now the word force, of which we are to speak, comes into play, and serves as a sign of the unknown causes of the phenomena, both of nature and of art; for effects are produced in the works of art by an imitation of those of nature, whereof the causes are unknown even to the artificer. When we employ the word alone, it is of very vague signification, and imports nothing more than some determining power intellectual or corporeal. But the mind takes two methods to give it greater precision, when that is necessary. We annex it sometimes to words which signify that whereof we would, on such occasions, denote the power in general to produce effects in physics, in mechanics, in ethics; and thus we say the force of wind, the force of a mill, or the force of habit. We annex at other times to it words that referring to particular known effects, serve to fix on every occasion the meaning of it; just as we annex the words hot or cold, to signify certain supposed qualities of body, and as intelligibly at least as we use the names of substances. Thus we speak of attractive, repelling, impelling force, of the force of gravitation, of cohesion, and even of inactivity. Our NEWTON, who has opened, by the help of these sure guides experiment and geometry, so large a field of knowledge and enquiry to present and future philosophers concerning the greatest and the least phenomena of nature, was far from pretending to determine the efficient cause of his attraction, or what that force is which makes bodies, and every particle of body, mutually tend to one another, and thereby give us an idea of attracting according to what has been taken notice of already. He distinguished so carefully between the particular attractions of the schools, and his meaning in the use of this word, that nothing could be more despicable than the ignorance or malice of those who would have confounded them, and have made him an asserter

of occult qualities, who discovered the most universal and the least occult quality, if I may have leave to call it so for once, that ever was, since it intercedes the whole corporeal system. To this, and to the several kinds of it, he referred all the phænomena that cannot be accounted for by impulse, and they are many, though many of those which were ascribed to a sort of attraction by the antients are on better foundations ascribed to impulse by the moderns. But neither for the cause of impulse, nor of attraction, nor of any action of body even the most sensible, can philosophy account. They, therefore, who use the word force as the sign of an unknown cause, whilst they apply themselves solely to discover the laws by which this cause acts, and the effects it produces, make a proper use of the word. They who affect to talk in any other manner, either physical or metaphysical, about force, abuse the word most impertinently, and pervert into artifice a very useful art of the mind.

BUT this is not the only method by which this art of the mind is perverted. It degenerates into artifice likewise, by the use which they make of it, who invent words to point out causes, they suppose unknown, of effects whose real causes are known. In the former method men are led into error, by affecting knowledge; in this, by affecting ignorance. Whatever force is, it is the cause of effects that are known, but cannot be ascribed to any cause that is known. In this the propriety of the word consists; for if they could be ascribed to any cause known and denominated, it would be improper, and the use of it could only serve to mislead. But there may be more than error, there may be fraud in this case; for, to borrow an image from the application of the word chance, the fair gamester who should see a raffle of fixes thrown several times together might ascribe it to chance, that is to an unknown

known cause, very properly ; but the sharper, who had loaded the dice, or who knew that they were loaded, would ascribe it to chance fraudulently as well as improperly.

I COULD wish that ALCIPHRON and LYSICLES had made this observation to EUPHRANOR, and had applied it to shew him why they admitted the word force, and rejected the word grace. The task would not have been hard, since it would not have been hard to shew him real causes sufficiently known, and sufficiently marked by words, of the effects ascribed by him to a cause supposed unknown, and marked by a distinct word appropriated to this purpose. They might have shewn these causes to be the influence of a religious education, a warm head, and a warmer heart ; hope, fear, grief, joy, strong passions turned by prejudice and habit to devotion, devotion itself nursing it's own principles, the effect in it's turn becoming a cause uniform and constant, or redoubling it's force on the least failure, in acts of attrition, contrition, mortification and repentance. They might have proved not only by probable reasons, but by indubitable facts, the sufficiency of these and other known causes to produce all the effects commonly ascribed to grace, even the most astonishing that ever appeared in saints, confessors, or martyrs. Nay they might have shewn that effects more astonishing, and many of them better vouched than most of these, have been and are still daily produced in men, whom it would be blasphemous to repute under the divine influence. ALCIPHRON might have illustrated this argument in his serious character, by quoting the saints, confessors, and martyrs of idolatry and heresy ; and LYSICLES in his gay-er character, by quoting those of atheism, and of the most abominable vices as well as the most indifferent customs, of pæderasty for instance and of long beards.

I AM thinking what EUPHRANOR would have replied to the minute philosophers, and can discover no reply worthy of that solidity and that candor which render him equally admirable and amiable. He might have said indeed that he was misunderstood by them, that the parity he insisted on was not meant to "consist in a proof of grace, as well as force from the effects; that it was only meant to answer an objection against the doctrine of grace, supposing it proved from revelation, and not to prove its existence; that therefore if the parity was sufficient to prove the possibility of believing grace without an idea of it, the objection they had made was answered, and he aimed at no more." But I think that, as minute philosophers as I am willing to allow ALCI-PHRON and LYSICLES to have been, they would have maintained very easily the pertinence of their objection, and the insufficiency of EUPHRANOR's answer.

THEY might have said, there is not even the parity you now suppose between force and grace. Our objection, against the latter, did, in effect, anticipate your reply: and if we allowed your reply to be a good one, it would neither strengthen your cause, nor weaken ours. The parity between force and grace, which you confine now to a possibility of believing one as well as the other, is not sufficient; because it is not real. The possibility of believing force is nothing more than the possibility of believing that every effect has a cause, tho' the cause be unknown to us, and the propriety of the word consists in the application of it to no other cause. The disparity and impropriety do not arise from our having no idea of grace, for it is true that we have none of force; but they arise from hence, that there is not the same possibility of believing a cause whereof we have no idea, and which cannot
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be ascertained by it's effects, as there is of believing one whereof we have no idea indeed, but which may be ascertained by it's effects. You assume grace as a cause of one particular kind, an immediate influence of God on the mind, and you apply it to effects that may have causes of several kinds. Should a word be invented to signify a moral cause of effects purely physical, or a physical cause of effects purely moral, you would laugh at the invention, and you would be in the right. But is it a jot less ridiculous to assign a particular cause, either natural or supernatural, of effects that may be produced by any or all of these, and to think to save the absurdity by saying, that the word invented to denote this cause has no idea attached to it, no more than that of force?

THE use of the word force can have no equivocal consequence, the use of the word grace may. The testimony, nay the conviction of men that they felt the influence of this unknown cause, would not take off the equivocation. How should it, after all the examples that may be brought from daily experience? A real enthusiast doubts no more of his perceptions of the operations of grace informing his mind and determining his will, than he doubts of his perceptions of the action of outward objects on his senses, and perhaps less.

ANOTHER thing, which I imagine that the minute philosophers would have said to EUPHRANOR, is this. Since the parity you endeavor to establish between force and grace cannot be so established as to answer your purpose on any principles of reason; it remains, that the notion of grace cannot be received, nor the word employed on any other authority, than that of implicit faith in the revelation by which you suppose the existence of grace proved. That authority obliges us to believe an action or an influence of God on his elect, the man-

ner of which no human idea can reach. But on what authority, EUPHRANOR, do you answer our "objection against the doctrine of grace, by supposing it proved by revelation?" If you have proved this fact, that the christian revelation, in which the doctrine of grace is contained, was made by God to mankind, as all facts and especially one of this importance ought to be proved, for every other kind of proof proves nothing, we will agree, tho' there be not the same reason for admitting grace as for admitting force, that both are to be received alike. Our objection was insufficient, but your answer then was unnecessary; for surely nothing can be more unnecessary than to go about to establish on probable arguments what is already established on demonstration: and the real existence of grace has been already demonstrated, if the truth of the revelation, in every part of it, has been so; since no proposition can be more demonstrated than this, that a doctrine taught by infinite wisdom and truth is a true doctrine. If you have not proved this fact, and we think you have scarce attempted it by the proper proofs, your argument is a pure sophism. When we urge that the doctrine of grace, or any other christian doctrine, is inconceivable, or that it is pregnant with absurd consequences, and therefore unworthy of God; this is urged in strictness, *ex abundantia*; for we do not give up the fundamental point, which is, that the authenticity of your scriptures, in the whole and in every part of them, and the truth by consequence of your revelation, has not been yet proved. When you suppose the contrary, therefore, in disputing with us, you beg the question about a principle, in order to confirm a consequence. Thus it seems to me, that the dispute between EUPHRANOR and the minute philosophers would have ended. What I have said upon it can be scarce called a digression; since this comparison of force and grace serves admirably

mirably well to exemplify what has been said concerning the art and artifice of the mind in the proper and improper use of words, to which no determinate ideas are annexed.

S E C T. VII.

MANY other arts there are by which the human mind endeavors to help itself in the acquisition and communication of knowledge. Some of them are as liable to abuse as these which have been mentioned, and all of them are abused more or less, to the production and propagation of error; for I presume, from what I have the means of observing, that this would be found true, on a strict examination, even in the applications of geometrical knowledge. But it is time I should put an end to this essay, that becomes a treatise in bulk at least, if not in matter nor method. That I may not conclude too abruptly however, even for such a rambling essay; it is necessary I should proceed to distinguish, in a few more instances, between real and imaginary knowledge, the natural powers and the arts, the arts and the artifices of the human mind: and if these instances should lead me further than I intend, you will please to ascribe this prolixity to my love of truth, and to my desire of giving you all the satisfaction I can.

I WILL observe, therefore, that as the sagacity of the mind has invented various arts whereby to improve the other faculties and even itself, and to carry their united forces a little further than the immediate lessons of nature carry them; so the affections of the mind have not only turned these arts frequently into artifice, an example or two of which we have seen, but have gone further. They have not only slid imperceptibly, but have plunged openly into artifice; and phi-

losophers, those that I intend here, seem to acquire knowledge only as a necessary step to error: when they have done this, when they have lost sight of the former, they grow so fond of the latter, that they esteem it no longer an human, but raise it, by an imaginary apotheosis, up to a divine science; which is, of all others, the most pernicious artifice of the mind, according to my lord BACON, and according to truth. “*Pessima res est errorum apotheosis, et pro peste intellectus habenda est si vanis accedat veneratio.*”

ARE these lovers of wisdom, these searchers of truth, you may well ask, nothing better than venders of false wares, venders of hypothetical systems at best, and often of such as are entirely fantastical? I fear that they are: and that the only excuse to be made for them is, that they sometimes deceive themselves first. They put me in mind of a passage in PLUTARCH, who compares the stoics to ships that set out under auspicious names, the SUCCESS or the SWIFTSURE for instance, and who are beaten by tempests in their voyage, or cast away. The great mischief is, that the implicit passenger shares the fate of the unwary mariner. In short, so it is: the most irrational of all proceedings pass for the utmost efforts of human reason; and that philosophy, which pretends to teach us the sublimest truths, serves only to amuse mankind in a middle or low region between truth and error, knowledge and ignorance.

LET us now resume the division of our ideas into such as are natural and such as are artificial. Those of the first sort are such as God appointed them to be, and are, therefore, real human ideas. Those of the second are framed by the mind, sometimes under the direction of judgment, and sometimes under the prevalent influence of imagination,
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and are accordingly sometimes real and sometimes fantastical. Real ideas are defined, by Mr. LOCKE, to be "such as have a foundation in nature, a conformity with the real Being and existence of things, or with their archetypes." Fantastical ideas then are such as have not this foundation, nor this conformity. Now this definition requires a little commentary to make it more clear, and more exact too, if I mistake not, in one part of it at least.

Our simple ideas are all real, whether they be ideas of the primary or of the secondary qualities of bodies, as some philosophers speak: or, as I had rather say, whether they be such as all body excites in us, like those of extension, solidity, figure, divisibility and mobility; or whether they be such as particular bodies excite in us, like those of colors, sounds, smells, tastes, and the whole tribe of tangible qualities. But in our complex ideas of substances, the case is not the same. They must be real as long as they are conformable to the combinations of simple ideas that exist in the substances which cause them. But they are liable to become fantastical, because it is in the power of the mind to form them without any regard to existence, and because their reality neither is nor can be founded in any thing but real existence actual or past. The reason of this, which Mr. LOCKE gives where he treats of the reality of human knowledge, is so obvious that a very little reflection must suggest it to every thinking man, in the present state of philosophy. The real constitutions of substances being entirely unknown, it is as impossible we should know which of the powers that cause our simple ideas can co-exist, and which cannot, any other way than by experience, as it is that we should know what these powers are. Whenever we frame ideas, therefore, of substances, without being authorized by existence, these complex ideas must needs be

fantastical; since they are composed of simple ideas proceeding from powers whose co-existence is, for aught we know, impossible. As obvious and as decisive as this reason is, it has not hindered men from exercising, even on substances, the power by which they boast themselves able to frame ideas of what may exist, as well as of what does exist, or has existed. Thus PLATO and others, both before and since his time, have peopled invisible worlds with so much poetical licence, that one is tempted to think of him, who seems to have been above the lowness of superstition, that he was very little in earnest, and meant rather to amuse than instruct an age wherein the marvelous was sure to please.

IT is the abuse and misapplication of this power, that has opened an inexhaustible source of fantastical ideas and notions, which have been the bane of philosophy, and have infected almost every branch of science. The proofs are innumerable; and the instances that may be produced are liable neither to objection nor evasion among men who join candor with knowledge; two qualifications that are inseparable from the love of truth; that promote one another in the discovery of it; that should always go together, and scarce ever do so. Fantastical ideas and notions of every conceivable kind, and even of substances immortal and mortal, celestial and infernal, divine and human, or amphibious beings that partake of the two natures, stare us in the face whenever we look into the histories, traditions and philosophical remains that are come down to us from the remotest antiquity. The same phenomena appear in all those of the intervening ages: and to say the truth, science, or rather that which passed for science, in many of these, was composed of little else. In these latter ages, even since the resurrection of letters, since the improvement of philosophy and of human reason, several ideas and notions that were principles of imaginary knowledge

ledge to the ancients have been preserved in esteem and veneration : as if that, which had no foundation in nature three thousand years ago, could have acquired it since, and ideas which were fantastical in their minds could ripen into reality in ours. They are not the less fantastical neither for having been purged of some circumstantial absurdities, and rendered a little more plausible by softenings and refinements. It must be confessed, that how deficient soever the ancient philosophers might be in real, they left scarce any thing new to be invented in imaginary science. But they left much to be improved : and this task several of the moderns have executed most successfully. We may say of fantastical ideas in general, what TULLY says of one kind of them, that of prognostications by dreams, at the close of his treatise on divination ; that the solicitude and fear they cause would have fallen into contempt, if philosophers, who seemed to be perfect masters of reason, had not taken upon them to be protectors of dreams.

BUT these general reflections would be more seasonable after some that are more particular, and that remain to be made. As far as we have gone, we have seen our way, I think, very clearly : and the distinction between real and fantastical ideas of substances is so well established, that they cannot be easily confounded. The distinction agrees with one part of Mr. LOCKE's definition ; and is founded in the same reason. But there is another part of this definition, which seems too inaccurately expressed in the chapter of real and fantastical ideas, and quite untrue, as well as a little inconsistent with what he advances elsewhere, according to the explanation of it in the chapter of the reality of knowledge. In the definition it is said, that our ideas are real when they have a conformity with their archetypes. In the explanation it is said, that " all our complex ideas, ex-

“cept those of substances, being archetypes of the mind’s
“own making, not intended to be copies of any thing, nor
“referred to the existence of any thing, as to their origi-
“nals, cannot want any conformity necessary to real know-
“ledge.” Conformity with what? With themselves? That meaning is too absurd to be supposed. With other ideas of what exists, or has existed? That cannot be intended neither; for these ideas are “not copies of any thing, nor
“refer to the existence of any thing as to their originals.” It remains, therefore, that we understand no conformity whatsoever necessary to make these ideas real, when it is said that they want not any that is necessary to make them so. Now this proposition I think absolutely untrue. There is a conformity, in the strict sense of the word, though of another kind, as necessary to make these ideas real, as the conformity proper to our ideas of substances is necessary to make them real: and all the complex ideas here spoken of are real or fantastical, as they have or have not this conformity. Thus it will appear, if we do not suffer the word archetype to perplex our thoughts. If all our complex ideas, except those of substances, are archetypes, they must be applicable, and properly and really applicable, to something; for it is at least as fantastical to frame an archetype applicable to nothing that is really typified by it, as to frame the idea of a substance that can be referred to no real existence as to the archetype of it. When archetypes are made by nature, they determine our ideas, as God, the author of nature, has appointed that they should be determined: and the knowledge we acquire by them is real knowledge for us and to all human purposes, whether these ideas do really resemble their archetypes or not; according to what has been inculcated already, and perhaps more than once. But when complex ideas and notions are framed by the mind to serve as archetypes in it, they must be framed with a conformity to
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the same nature that determines the others, or they will be fantastical and produce no knowledge, or such as is fantastical like themselves. I do not say that they must be framed so as to contain nothing which implies contradiction. They have been so framed, indeed, as to imply it on many occasions, by antient and modern fables and saints. But we will suppose, that they are so no longer : and on that supposition we say, that even this is not sufficient, and that all these ideas must have a closer conformity than that of bare possibility to what we know of the existence of things corporeal or intellectual. Universal possibility is the range of divine particular actuality, passed or present, and that in a very confined system of human intellect.

THE ideas we speak of, it is said, are neither "intended to be copies of any thing, nor referred to the existence of any thing as to their originals." If this was absolutely true, all such ideas would be archetypes in a strict sense, and could be conceived no otherwise. But it is not absolutely true. It is rather a definition of fantastical, than of real, ideas. Our most complex ideas and notions which combine in the greatest variety, modes and relations, as well as simple ideas, are often copies; they are often referred to existences, to particular existences, as to their originals : and when they are not so, when they are put together in the mind, as the mind never perceived them put together in existence, tho' this may be said to be done "by the free choice of the mind, and without considering any connection they have in nature," yet are they not, when they are real, quite arbitrary, nor quite void of reference to existence. Mr. LOCKE shall prove this for me. He says, that one of the ways by which we get these complex ideas of mixed modes is experience and observation of things themselves. In all these instances then, the complex idea is derived from existence, and is a copy
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first, though it becomes an architype afterwards. It is so in the example he brings, in that of seeing two men wrestle. It is so in a multitude of others, in all those that are real and of real use. Murder is as old as human race, and theft as property. Shall we believe that men were lawgivers and moralists, before they were spectators of the actions of one another? Invention is another of the ways he mentions, in which, by a voluntary act of the mind, several simple ideas are put together in it, and the architype precedes existence. But even in these cases, the combinations of ideas ascribed to the invention of the mind, are suggested to it by other combinations, as it would be easy to shew in the example brought of printing: and though the mind cannot be said to copy, when it has no particular existence in view, yet must it be allowed to imitate, when it has in view not only it's simple ideas, but divers combinations of them, derived immediately or remotely from what exists or has existed in the system of nature: and these it has in view always when the complex ideas and notions we frame are not purely fantastical. Those of parricide and sacrilege were framed perhaps by some men, for they were not by all, before either of these crimes had been committed; and so they might, without doing much honor to the boasted power of knowing *a priori* and independently of existence. The relation of father and son is added to the complex idea of murder in one: and as soon as one order of men and their property came to be reputed sacred, it required no superior intelligence to foresee that they might be robbed as well as other men. But the mathematician never saw a circle mathematically true, such as he describes, and whose properties he considers: neither did TULLY ever see such an image of virtue as he proposes, and whose principles and effects are explained in his offices. Be it so. But the mathematician, who considers the properties of a circle, a square, or a rectangle, had observed the various

rious terminations of extension before he turned mathematician, and the moralist had observed, wherein the good and evil of society consists, and had framed, on what he observed, ideas and notions concerning virtue and vice, and the perfection of human nature before he writ of ethics. The ideas and notions of both, to be productive of real knowledge, must be derived from existence, and referred back again to it.

ACCORDING to Mr. LOCKE, our knowledge “ concerning “ these ideas is real, and reaches things themselves ; because “ we intend things no farther, than as they are conformable to “ our ideas.” These ideas then, to be real, must reach things themselves; that is, they must be rightly abstracted from things that exist, and they must be applied to things, no farther than things are conformable to them. This now coincides enough with the opinion I advance. Our ideas are fantastical, and our knowledge imaginary, when the former are framed without a sufficient conformity to existence, and when they are applied to things to which they are not applicable ; for as ideas and notions may be void of all reality in themselves, so may they become fantastical by a fantastical application.

THE mistake about these complex ideas carries much resemblance to that which Mr. LOCKE exposes so justly about maxims or axioms. These have been reputed the principles of science, whereas they are in truth the result of it, when they are evident ; and cannot pass therefore with any propriety for the præcognita and præconcessa, for which they have been vended in the schools. Just so the complex ideas we speak of are called archetypes ; and men infatuate one another enough to imagine that there is a superior intellectual region, as it were, a region of ideas that are the principles of general scientific knowledge, from whence particular knowledge is to be deduced, and

by which it is to be controled. Whereas in truth all our ideas and notions are fantastical, as all our maxims are false, when they are not founded in particular knowledge: when they are carried further than evidence, the criterion of truth, accompanies them; and above all, when they are repugnant, as philosophical and theological ideas and notions frequently are, to this very evidence and to our knowledge of things as they exist.

SOMETHING has been said concerning ideas and notions in a former part of this essay, that may seem to render what is here said about such as are fantastical the less necessary. But having occasion to speak of these, I chuse rather to run the risque of repetition (usefully I hope to the great end of fixing the bounds of real knowledge) than not to bring into a fuller view this intellectual artifice, which has served to build up so much imaginary knowledge, at the expence of neglecting the other, and of corrupting it in all it's parts. It was by the means of fantastical ideas and notions that chemistry was turned into alchymy; astronomy into judicial astrology; physics, by which I understand the contemplation of mind as well as body, into theurgic and natural magic; and the religion of nature into various systems of plain, but almost blasphemous, doctrines of absurd mysteries and superstitious rites. All these effects proceeded from the vain philosophy of men more intent to imagine what may be, than to observe what is: and if we add to these such as have proceeded from fantastical notions of abstraction, upon which the tedious and impertinent subtilties of ontology are founded, we shall have before us very nearly the sum of all that learned error into which men have fallen by reasoning on fantastical ideas and notions in search of real: as if it was below the majesty of the human mind to seek for reality and truth out of itself: and as if our senses were

were given us only to excite our intellect, and not to inform it by experiment and observation.

THE principal occasions, on which the mind exercises the artifice spoken of in framing ideas that are fantastical, may be reduced to these three. Philosophers invent hypothetical ideas and notions in order to erect on them such systems as cannot be erected on real ideas and notions, that is on ideas and notions that have a known foundation in nature. They treat of ideas and notions that are incomplete and inadequate, as if they were complete and adequate. They dogmatize on obscure and confused ideas and notions, as if they were clear and distinct. Let us produce in this essay one example at least of the first. Your patience and mine too may be worn out by that time: and the examples omitted now may be taken up at some other.

S E C T. VIII.

I MIGHT have reckoned hypotheses among those arts of the mind that degenerate into artifice; for such they have been often. The greatest part of ancient philosophy, almost all except ethics, was nothing else: and to mention no other among the moderns, DES CARTES had much to answer for of this kind. His great reputation put hypotheses into fashion; and natural philosophy became a sort of physical romance. But this manner of imposing imaginary for real knowledge is over, whilst one more absurd remains in credit; and, whilst naturalists can slide no longer from art into artifice without being detected, metaphysicians set out in artifice, and they succeed. An hypothesis in physics can make it's way now no faster nor no further than experience countenances and supports it. But in metaphysics it is otherwise. Their hypotheses stand alone:

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they stand in the place of experimental knowledge, are not so much as deduced from it by a fair analogy, but are made independently of, and frequently in direct contradiction to it.

THEY who plead for hypotheses urge, not very unreasonably, that they may be of some use in the investigation of truth, whilst they are employed; and that they may serve to the same purpose, even when they are discovered to be false and are laid aside: as men who have missed their way give some instruction to others to find it. Besides which they do not so much as pretend that any hypothesis ought to be maintained, if a single phenomenon stands in direct opposition to it. I do not agree to this plea in the whole, but to the latter part of it entirely. By that, the criterion of hypothesis is established by the favorers of them: we take it as they give it; and this criterion in the physical world is real actual existence. The Copernican system, itself, stands on no other bottom. The Newtonian system of attraction stands on the same: and this bottom is grown so broad and so firm, that neither the jokes of foreign wits, nor the cavils of foreign philosophers, can shake it as far as sensible bodies and sensible distances are concerned. But at the same time they who presume to suppose it equally certain where insensible bodies, the *minima naturæ*, and insensible distances, are concerned, as some of our countrymen have done, presume too much; this application of it not having been yet enough confirmed: and they have been accordingly justly censured for raising too hastily an hypothesis into a system. With such precautions and under such restrictions, hypotheses can do no hurt, nor serve to propagate error. But then it is surely a ridiculous scene to observe how confidently some metaphysical philosophers, who shew themselves extremely scrupulous about such hypotheses as I have mentioned, either admit on the authority of others,

or publish on their own, not barely as hypotheses but as demonstrations, the wildest notions imaginable; notions that are founded in nothing known nor knowable, and that can be tried, therefore, by no criterion whatever.

I HAVE spoken of physics and metaphysics sometimes in the usual stile; but I am far from altering the opinion I have already owned, and cannot, therefore, acquiesce to the pretensions of those who, under the umbrage of a supposed science that considers general natures, essences, being in the abstract, and spirit or immaterial substance, would place themselves in a rank of philosophical precedence above those who consider corporeal nature in the several phænomena, and would control, what they neglect, particular experimental knowledge. As to the ontosophists, they are the lineal descendants of the schoolmen; and they deal like their progenitors in little else than hard words and such abstract ideas and notions, as render our knowledge neither more distinct nor more extensive, but serve to perplex it and to envelope in their obscurity what is in itself very plain. I shall neglect them therefore, as the rest even of the learned world appears to do. The example I am to produce, under this head of hypothetical ideas and notions, shall be taken from those philosophers who usurp and appropriate to themselves, as if it were their peculiar province, the doctrine of spirits and spiritual things; whereas pneumatics taken in this sense, if they are any thing, are as truly objects of physics, as pneumatics, taken in a more proper sense, for that branch of natural philosophy whose object is the air we breathe. This distinction, however, has been established; and by the help of it, whilst naturalists are not at liberty to make hypotheses that are not founded in some degree of experimental knowledge, and that are not liable to be controled by it in all their parts and in all their
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progreſs, metaphyſicians are left at liberty to frame as many fantaſtical ſyſtems as they pleaſe on ideas and notions purely hypothetical, without any regard to this foundation, or this control, as we obſerved juſt now.

As ſoon as men began to reflect on their own nature, and on that of all the bodies which ſurrounded them, they could not fail to obſerve ſolidity, extenſion, figure, diviſibility, and mobility, the moſt apparent properties of body or matter. As little could they fail to obſerve the operations of their own minds, in which they had the perceptions of theſe ideas, and to frame ideas of thought, and of the ſeveral modes of thinking, particularly of that which has the power of beginning motion. None of theſe ideas were contained in their ideas of body, nor neceſſarily connected with them: and that of a power to begin motion, which they obſerved to be in the whole animal kind, and which they knew conſciouſly to be the effect of thought, muſt ſtrike them as a ſuperior property to that of mobility, with which they had occaſion to compare it every inſtant. Taking it for granted then, that they knew, as ſoon as they began to philoſophize, all the perceivable properties of matter, they concluded, that ſuch things as could not be accounted for by theſe, were to be accounted for by the properties of ſome unperceivable or unperceived matter, or elſe by the properties of ſome other ſubſtance. The firſt aſſumption was that of the moſt antient philoſophers: the other was made much later, at leaſt it was much later that extended and non-extended ſubſtance were plainly contra-diſtinguiſhed.

THUS the diſtinction of body and ſoul came to be made and eſtabliſhed among almoſt all the philoſophers. It would be tedious even to run over the confuſed notions that were entertained

tertained about soul. It was fire ; but a divine fire to some : it was air to others : a fifth element to others, “ *quintam* “ *quandam naturam **,” and therefore ARISTOTLE called it by a new name *entelekia*, to signify a certain continued and perpetual motion. “ *Sic ipsum animum entelekian appellat no-* “ *vo nomine, quasi quandam continuatam motionem et pe-* “ *rennem †.*” In a word, it was something, they knew not what, which they thought fit to call breath or spirit, for a reason obvious enough : and the notion of it answered philosophical purposes, in metaphysics, just as well as that of occult qualities answered them in physics. A vast profusion of souls followed. They were created by the exorbitant power of hypothesis as fast and as often as they were wanted. There was an universal soul common to the whole system of corporeal being, or a soul of the world ; for the world was, in the imagination of some of the antients, a great animal, and consisted, like the animals it contains, of a body and a soul. There were particular souls for celestial and terrestrial bodies, a soul of the sun, a soul of every star and planet, a vegetative soul for plants, a sensitive soul for other animals ; and for man there was an ample provision of three, of the two last and of a rational soul, which was a participation of the Divine mind, or an emanation from it, or an infusion out of it.

IF we descend from those times to our own, we shall find the same hypothesis maintained with a little less confusion of opinions, in more precise and uniform terms at least, but still as unintelligibly as ever. SPINOZA, indeed, acknowledged but one substance, and that matter ; as absurdly as others have acknowledged but one substance, and that spirit. On the principle of the former, the vegetative, the sensitive,

* Tusc. quæst.

† Ibid.

sitive, and even the rational soul can be nothing else than matter differently fermented and subtilized in systems of it differently organized ; for which opinion whatever is said, should be said, and might be said, without admitting the principle of SPINOZA in it's full extent ; without supposing God a material being, from whence the most absurd consequences would follow, and without denying his existence, which would imply, if that be possible, more. But the general run of opinion assumes the soul to be a spiritual substance, and a spiritual substance to be unextended, indivisible, and therefore immortal. Now this assumption helps the hypothesis so little, that the extravagancies fancy builds on it are as great, and the difficulties opposed to it perhaps greater, than when the soul was deemed material by some Christian, as well as Pagan philosophers ; for that it was so your learned friends will I am sure confess. Many notions, extravagant and fantastical to the utmost, might be cited. Can there be any thing more extravagant, or that implies contradiction more grossly than to divide this indivisible substance, like the mystic divines, who had a precedent for it in that mystic philosopher PLATO, into an upper and lower part ? The good madmen mean well, no doubt : but there is reason to suspect that, among their disciples, the lower part of the soul and the body are much defiled by imagination and sensation too, whilst the purity of the upper part, where the understanding and the will reside, preserves the conscience in a most heavenly tranquility.

SHOULD you object to this instance of extravagant opinions, built on the hypothesis of the soul considered as a simple unextended being united to the body, because it is taken from those of madmen who are capable of framing the most extravagant and falsest notions on the most reasonable and evident principles ; let us lay aside all other instances, and produce as
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the most extravagant of all that wherein every man who deals in theology mad or sober concurs ; that opinion for the sake of which this hypothesis of the soul was invented, and which is as little reconcileable to the wisdom of God and to the moral ideas of justice and goodness, as thought is to all the properties that we know of matter. The human soul then, which participates of the divine nature by emanation, by infusion, or by some other incomprehensible act, on account of which alone we are said to be made after the image of God, is confined to the human body, and is diffused through the whole to inform and to govern ; or has a principal residence, like the seat of empire, in the pineal gland, or in that part of the brain where I have read that there is a sort of nervous juice, the source of animal spirits, of a most fragrant smell ; and which puts me in mind of the perfume that the inspiring divinity spread in the temples where oracles were delivered to the Pagans. Whilst the soul is thus immersed in matter, the lustre of it is obscured by this removal from it's divine original. The force and energy of it is clogged, nay it seems since the fall to contract an inclination to corporeity, and to assimilate in some sort with this inferior nature, as if they were homogeneous. Our first parents received from sensible objects, after their fall, such strong impressions and such deep traces in their brains, “ *de si grands vestiges, et des traces si profondes**,” that they may well have communicated these to the brains of all their descendants. Now the thoughts of the soul being necessarily conformable to the traces that are in the brain, it is you see demonstrated most metaphysically, that in this respect the soul is dependent on the body, and it's thoughts and inclinations on the thoughts and inclinations of those who begot the body it inhabits in a perpetual gradation of generations down from ADAM and EVE. Thus the soul, that spiritual monarch of the human system, is

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* MATH. I. 2. C. 7.

subject not only to a limitation of power, but to a determination to govern ill. The soul does not remain long indeed in this state, because the system it governs is soon dissolved by death. But the short time it remains in it, decides of it's state for eternity. It seems to be delivered from the body, and to be restored to the full force of it's nature and to the free exercise of it's powers, in order only to suffer, for the most part, during an eternity, for what it did in the government of the body when it enjoyed neither during a moment. As soon as philosophers and divines are able to reconcile all this to their ideas of the wisdom, justice and goodness of God, the hypothesis will be no longer necessary, at least to the former; since they will not find it at all more difficult to reconcile thought to their ideas of the properties of matter.

THE task would be endless, and I shall neither give myself nor you the trouble to enumerate more of the fantastical ideas, notions and opinions, that have been raised on this hypothesis of a simple immaterial active being, which understands and wills, or by which we are made able to understand and will. I make this distinction, because philosophers who set out from the same goal take very different ways in the pursuit of ideas equally fantastical. Some of them banish out of the whole extent of Being every thing, except ideas and spirit whereof we can have no idea, and which is only known by consciousness. Nothing in heaven nor earth, none of those bodies which we repute to be sensible objects have any existence out of some mind or other. They may exist eternally, and be always actually present in an eternal spirit; but they have besides this no existence, except one that is occasionally communicated. They exist in created spirits, when they are perceived; and they cease to exist, when they are not perceived there. Other philosophers again declare the existence of body hard to be proved; whilst that of spirit,

rit, under this notion of it, needs no proof according to them. They pretend to have a knowledge of immaterial spirit that excludes all doubt, and they assume hypothetically that there is such an entity as body, which is the very reverse, I presume, of the most evident dictates of common sense. But however, on this bold assumption that there is such a being as body, they proceed to account for the union of the soul with body on one hand, and with God on the other; and so multiplying hypothetical ideas one on another, they open a fantastical scene of science wherein every man's imagination (for every man has the same right to imagine) is his sole guide, and wherein it is plain from their extravagant writings that they have, and from the nature of the thing that they can have, no other guide.

DES CARTES, who might not so much as dream perhaps that philosophers would set themselves in good earnest to banish body out of the universe and the universe with it, affirmed two substances, one whose essence is extension, and to which all the modifications of extension belong, and one whose essence is thought, and to which all the modifications of thinking belong. Now both these definitions are so evidently false that every man may know them to be so who considers them without philosophical prejudice, of all prejudices the strongest. How strong it is, appears in this very instance; for when DES CARTES affirmed extension alone to be the essence of body, he was led by his philosophical prejudices to affirm an identical proposition and to beg a question. He affirmed that body is body, for he supposed the plenum. It is true, we cannot separate body in our ideas from extension, neither can we conceive body exclusively of solidity. But we can separate extension from solidity in our ideas; and therefore, as Mr. LOCKE observes, if it be a good

argument "that spirit is different from body, because thinking includes not the idea of extension in it, space or extension alone is not body, because it includes not the idea of solidity in it." In short, they are so evidently distinct ideas that he who confounds them in words must discern their difference in his understanding, whether he will or no. The difference is so evident, that if the plenum was admitted, and pure space rejected, yet still the definition of the Cartesians would be imperfect; for the essence of body, throughout this imaginary plenum, could not be extension alone. Solidity could not be banished out of it, but extension would continue to include solidity, as solidity is allowed to include extension; and extension and solidity would be two distinct ideas, but two essential properties of the same substance still.

THE definition of thinking substance is not truer than this of extended substance, and the falsity of it is obvious to constant experience. That we live, and move, and think according to certain human modes of thinking, and that there must be something in the constitution of our system of being beyond the known properties of matter to produce such phenomena as these, are undeniable truths. But here certainty ends. What that something is we know not, and surely it is time we should be convinced that we cannot know it. Thankfulness and modesty would become us better than philosophical and theological assurance: thankfulness, when we look up to the great Author of all natures for raising ours either in kind or in degree above that of any other animal; and modesty, when we look down on ourselves to avow our ignorance. Instead of this, vanity and presumption determine philosophers to conclude, that since they cannot account for the phenomena of the mind, by what they know very superficially

superficially of solid extended substance, this mind must be some other substance. On this foundation they reason admirably well *à priori*, and prove with much plausibility that this mind, this soul, this spirit, is not material and is immortal. In the same manner they proceed, and well they may, to prove any thing that metaphysics and theology want to have proved. But this foundation is an assumption that cannot stand an examination *à posteriori*, and that if it could stand it would carry us but one step forward in knowledge; for if nothing which is an object of real knowledge could be opposed to the immateriality and immortality of this substance, the insuperable difficulty of accounting for the action of mind on body, and of body on mind, that are reciprocally and in their turns both active and passive, would stop our philosophical enquiries. The divine alone would have made a step sufficient for his purpose. Thus do the reputed masters of human reason advance propositions as demonstrated truths, which have not even the merit of a tolerable hypothesis. But it is not enough to affirm like them. I must prove what I say, by appealing to that criterion of truth, from which there lies no appeal, to clear and determinate ideas duly abstracted from the phenomena of nature, and to an intuitive knowledge of their agreement or disagreement. Now this, I think, it will not be hard to do.

I do not pretend to deny the possible existence of spiritual, that is, according to the present notion, of immaterial beings. I have no more right to deny that there are such, than the persons just mentioned have to affirm it. God alone, the Author of all beings, knows how many different kinds of substances, how many various sorts of beings his omnipotent will has made to exist. But this I say, that we have not the same proof of the existence of unextended and spiritual,

spiritual, as we have of extended and solid substance. We have not the same proof, because we have not the same knowledge on which to ground any. We guess probably, if you please, from what we observe of our own minds that one exists; but we know as certainly, as God has given us the means of knowing outward objects, that the other exists. The ideas we receive by reflection are in this case and in this respect equivocal, they do not reach up to the apparent nature of the substance that causes them. But the ideas we receive from sensation are not so; they do reach up to the apparent nature of the substance that causes them. The former do not so much as constitute what Mr. LOCKE calls a nominal essence: the latter do. There are many questions to be asked, no doubt, concerning body, which it is impossible to answer, as well as concerning spirit; because we are made incapable of knowing the real essence of any substance: and if there was no other difference, we might as well affirm the existence of immaterial as of material substance. But there is another difference; and it is not enough to have hinted it, I must explain it.

MR. LOCKE takes much pains to shew, that the notion of spirit involves no more difficulty nor obscurity in it than that of body*: and yet I think I can make him prove the contrary for me, and shew against his own assertion, that we have "more and clearer primary ideas belonging to body" than we have belonging to immaterial spirit." Primary ideas are the ideas of such qualities as exist always in the substance to which they belong, whether they are perceived or not. They are, therefore, essential to it, and productive, by their operations, of those secondary qualities which may be said only to exist in our perceptions of them. Of the first sort are solidity and extension, to mention no others, the
primary

* Essay, l. 2. c. 23.

primary qualities, and in our ideas the essence of matter, of which we can frame no conception exclusively of them. These notions I have taken from Mr. LOCKE, and they lead me to ask what the primary ideas are of spirit or immaterial substance? The primary idea or the essence of it is thought; as body is the extended, this is the thinking substance, says DES CARTES. Thought then, actual thought, is the essence of the soul or spirit, and by consequence so inseparable from it that we cannot conceive the soul or spirit to exist separately from, or exclusively of thought. But this I know to be untrue: and I may well own, since LOCKE has owned the same, that I have "one of those dull souls that does not perceive itself always to contemplate ideas." I distinguish very well between being asleep and being awake. I continue to live, but not to think during the soundest sleep, and the faculties of my soul and body awake together. Thus evidently do I know, that thought is no more the essence of soul than motion of body: and if thought is not so, I ask what is?

BODY is capable of receiving and communicating motion by impulse; but without solidity and extension it would be capable of neither. Thought, not being the essence of the soul, can be nothing but an action of it, and thus far answers motion in body. But what is it then which answers solidity and extension, and is the primary quality of spirit? Is it immateriality? Is it the negation of material essence? No man will, I presume, give so silly an answer. At least no man who does, must expect a reply. He who affirms, that there is in the composition of the human system, a substance to which cogitability belongs, as well as a substance to which mobility belongs, must have ideas of the first of these substances prior in the order of nature to that of its cogitability, as he has ideas of the second prior in the same order to that of its mobility;

bility; or he must talk at random, and affirm what he does not know. His supposed distinct substance must sink into nothing, or be confounded with the other; for it will cost a reasonable mind much less to assume, that a substance known by some of its properties may have others that are unknown, and may be capable, in various systems, of operations quite inconceivable by us, according to the designs of Infinite Wisdom, than to assume that there is a substance concerning which men do not pretend to know what it is, but merely what it is not.

It may be said, LOCKE has said it, that we know no more of the solid than of the thinking thing, nor how we are extended than how we think. But the comparison is improper, and unfair. It is improper, because it compares the operation of an assumed substance with the known properties of a real substance. It is unfair, because it slides over and evades the objection that we have not a positive idea of any one primary property of spirit, or at least that if cogitability be such a primary quality, this definition of the soul is no better than that of a moveable substance would be, if it was given as the full definition of body. But besides, tho' the cohesion of the solid particles of body be not sufficiently accounted for by the pressure of the air, or of any ambient fluid, and tho' that seeming property of matter, which is called for want of a better name attraction, be not yet perhaps enough established; yet we have a very clear idea of cohesion in its effects, by which insensible atoms are so united and held together, that the bodies they compose become sensible to us, and give us the ideas of solidity and extension. Have we any knowledge proportionable to this, as imperfect as it is, of soul under the notion of an immaterial spirit? It cannot be said that we have. Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude without presumption

tion against two of the greatest men of their age, against DES CARTES, that thinking is not the essence of the soul; and against LOCKE, that a solid extended substance is not quite so hard to be conceived as a thinking immaterial one.

BUT LOCKE, much less dogmatical than DES CARTES, how far soever he favored the reigning opinion, or thought it necessary for him to keep measures with those who support it, was far from asserting the immateriality of the soul. He found inducements of probability to this and to the contrary opinion, certainty of demonstration for neither *. When he is to shew that our knowledge is narrower and more confined than our ideas, he brings the instance of these two, of matter and thinking, and of the impossibility of knowing by the contemplation of them, or by any other way, except by revelation, whether that which thinks in us be not material. He sees "no contradiction in it, that the first eternal thinking Being should, if he pleased, give to certain systems of created senseless matter, put together as he thinks fit, some degrees of sense, perception and thought." He endeavors to guard against theological choler, by urging "that the great ends of morality and religion are well enough secured without philosophical proofs of the soul's immateriality, since it is evident that he who made us-----sensible, intelligent beings can," and he adds, "will restore us to the like state of sensibility in another world." But all this precaution could not save him from the joint attacks of philosophers and of divines, not very orthodox on other points. They † have insisted, since thought is not the essence of matter, nor an attribute of matter neither, in as much as

* Essay, l. 4. c. 3.

† LEIBNITZ, WOLLASTON, &c.

it does not flow necessarily from that essence, it cannot have been communicated nor superadded even by omnipotence to any system of matter; because essences are unchangeable, and attributes uncommunicable; so that matter cannot be made to think. The moment any system begins to think, it ceases to be material: and that which was matter becomes a substance of another kind. In fine, that it is nonsense to assert that God "can * superadd a faculty of thinking "to incogitativity, of acting freely to necessity, and so on †."

It

* Rel. of Nat. delineated, §. 9.

† Since it has been observed on this occasion, in how trifling a manner the pretended masters of abstract reasoning subject the reality of things to words; it may not be improper to observe another fallacy that runs through all their discourses, concerning the thinking substance.

When we know with certainty that any being exists, many doubts may be raised, we may endeavor to solve them by hypotheses, and we may endeavor it in vain: but still they will be no more than difficulties to the solution of which our knowledge does not extend. The known truth will remain unshaken. On the other hand, when we assume on probable arguments that any being exists, the doubts and difficulties that arise are real objections; because they are probable arguments opposed to probable arguments, and the whole being hypothesis, the whole may be shaken.

THEISTS demonstrate the existence of one supreme, infinite, all-perfect Being. Atheists cavil; and, tho' they cannot unravel the demonstration, they oppose doubts and difficulties, as if probable arguments, supposing these to be such, could prevail against demonstration. Their proceeding is absurd: and reason is evidently on the side of the theist. But now, are they, who assert a distinct thinking substance united in the human system, to a material unthinking substance, in the case of the theists? Are they who deny this, in the case of the atheists? Certainly not. The former, except a few who are in the height of a metaphysical delirium, do not pretend that they can demonstrate by reason what they maintain, and yet they argue as if they had made this demonstration. This is the fallacy I mean: and I need not go far to seek an instance of it, since I find one in the Religion of Nature delineated, that follows the passage I have quoted.

THIS solemn author then, in his third argument for the immortality of the soul, drops the question, whether it be immaterial or not, on which he had pronounced so dogmatically a few pages before, and asks, only by way of objection, "whether that soul, be it what it will, which ceases to think when the body is not

It is hard to say, whether in these and other common-place reasonings on the same subject there is more presumption, or trifling

“ fitly disposed, can think at all when the body is quite dissolved ? ” Now to this question he proposes to give an answer, of which he speaks modestly and diffidently, and yet presumes it may be turned “ even into an argument for the immortality of the soul.”

THIS answer comes out to be nothing better than a string of suppositions. He, who says that the power of thinking is a faculty superadded by the Creator to certain systems of matter in various degrees and proportions, assumes indeed, but he assumes conformably to the phenomena. He, who says that thought is the essence of a distinct substance united to certain systems of matter, because he cannot conceive how matter can be made capable of thinking even by omnipotence, assumes without any support from the phenomena, nay even in an apparent contradiction to them. Every instance, therefore, of this contradiction is a good argument in favor of the former, and against the latter opinion. No matter. The pneumatic philosopher proceeds as if his first proposition was proved, and he had only a few difficulties to remove rather than objections to refute, as if his doctrine wanted only to be explained. He explains it no more, than he invented it, on the foundation of that which actually is, but on what he thinks may be; and so he may argue on, if he finds men idle enough to dispute much with him, as long as his imagination can supply fantastic ideas and notions.

THE very question whether the “ soul, which ceases to think when the body “ is not fitly disposed, can think at all when the body is quite dissolved,” supposes that there is a soul, that is, a distinct substance united to it, tho’ this neither has been, nor can be proved. The answer sets out by supposing that this distinct substance is a limited being, limited, obstructed, clogged by the body. Even here we might interrupt this licentious maker of hypotheses, and insist that it is not congruous to reason to assume that a substance, which is immaterial according to him, which has none above it except the substance of God himself according to St. AUSTIN, and by which we are made after the image of God according to all those who maintain the same doctrine, for he must not be suffered to slide over any of his, or their extravagant assertions—is limited, obstructed, clogged by that material substance by which we are allied to the beasts of the field, and made after the image of other animals.

BUT to pass by this, the soul then is “ limited, it’s activity and faculties being “ more obstructed and clogged at one time than another, and most of all in sleep, “ or a deliquium.” The eyes, the two windows of it’s prison, are shut, and the nerves which receive the impressions of outward objects, and convey sensations to the soul, are benumbed. This branch of knowledge is cut off, therefore in such circumstances, and thought cannot be exercised on objects that do not present themselves to the soul. But why then is it not exercised on the ideas and

trifling and playing with words in a solemn dogmatical tone. They amount to no more than this. We metaphysicians and
 ontosophists

notions that the soul is possessed of already, in the contemplation of which it has no need of sense; so much otherwise, that detached from sense, and wrapped in pure intellect, the soul meditates and reasons with greater intenseness and clearness about these abstract ideas and notions?

If you ask this question, you will be answered by other suppositions. You will be told that the use of words is necessary even in abstract meditation, that this silent language depends on memory, and that memory depends on certain tracks which are made on the brain. You will be told that these tracks are the characters of that book wherein the soul must read to think in this manner; and that when the characters are overcast by vapors, or any other way darkened, the soul can read them no more till the cloud is dispelled. You may object that thinking cannot be, on this hypothesis, the essence of the soul, or that the soul must cease to be what it is every time we fall into sound sleep, or faint entirely into a deliquium, and return to be what it was before, every time we awake or come out of the deliquium; which differs little from assuming a perpetual creation of souls every twenty-four hours at least. There is something so very ridiculous in this notion, that I should be ashamed to mention it, if it did not follow necessarily that of a substance whose essence is thought and who does not always think, and if it was not of use to shew in every instance, as it occurs, the monstrous absurdities in which the reasonings of these metaphysicians are apt to terminate.

THE metaphysician we have to deal with here screens himself from the imputation of this absurdity, as well as he can, by a change of terms. He asserts only that the soul preserves a capacity of thinking "even in those circumstances in which it thinks no more than if the body was destroyed." And from hence he assumes, that "it may, and will preserve this capacity when the body is destroyed, cut to pieces, or mouldered to dust." He asserts the first on the evidence of the phenomena. He assumes the last without any possible evidence from them, nay with a strong presumption derived from them against him. Whilst we are alive we preserve the capacity of thinking, I should rather call it the faculty, just as we preserve the faculty of moving and other faculties plainly corporeal, subject alike to many impediments and many infirmities of the body, in which the faculty of thinking has the largest share, as it might be shewn in various instances, in that of madness particularly. When we are dead, all these faculties are dead with us: and the sole difference that we make in our judgments of the one and the other arises from hence, that we imagine the capacity or faculty of thinking to belong to a substance distinct from the body, concerning which the phenomena can shew us nothing after death; and concerning which by consequence metaphysicians and divines think themselves at liberty to say whatever they please. You would smile, if you heard any one say, that the man who has preserved the faculty

ontosophists have fixed the essence of matter. It can be no other than it is, represented in our abstract ideas, those eternal natures

culty of walking, after having lost and recovered frequently the use of his legs, will for this reason walk eternally. But you hearken very gravely when you hear another say, on as little knowledge, that he will think eternally; because he has preserved the capacity of thinking, after losing it in the whole or in part on so many occasions.

How much soever we may deem the thinking and unthinking substance to be distinct in nature, still it will be true that these assumed souls were given to inform bodies, and thereby complete the human system. The system would be too imperfect to answer any conceivable purpose of making it, if either of them was wanting. Without thinking, the body would be unable to begin motion, and to perform many necessary corporeal operations. Without a body, the soul would be unable to acquire the first elements of knowledge, the materials of thought. In short, neither of them could exist, and act in a state of total separation from the other. WOLLASTON was so sensible of this, that he supposes it, and in order to maintain that the soul does not cease to exist when the body does, notwithstanding this admission, he retails to his readers an old trite chimera of the Platonic philosophy, which has been mentioned above. He assumes, that the soul has another body besides this which perishes. "Some fine vehicle that dwells with it in the brain, and goes off with it at death." This innermost body, which may be compared to the shirt of the soul, receives impressions from the outward body, which may be compared to its great coat: and as those impressions of sensible objects are communicated to the shirt, so the shirt communicates them to the soul, who sits enveloped in it in the brain. On the other side reciprocally, the soul being thus put into motion produces motion in the "contiguous spirits and nerves" by moving its own vehicle, and so moves the body." When the great coat is worn out, or destroyed by any accident, the soul flies in its shirt away into the open fields of heaven, and thus undressed as it were, the impressions that were made mediately by the nerves are made immediately on it: thus it becomes, "as it were, all eye to visible objects, and all ear to audible, and so on."

I MIGHT have explained this hypothesis further, with Mr. WOLLASTON's help, but my patience would not serve me; tho' he thinks it contains nothing impossible, and therefore nothing but what may be. Many things are, he says very truly, by ways which we do not, nor can understand. But then this plea is not to be admitted in every case alike; for if it was, it would go a great way to screen the false theories which philosophers are apt to frame both in physics and metaphysics. A primum mobile, an element of fire, were names invented to signify things which have no existence; and such was the word soul, perhaps, in philosophical consideration, if we take it not for a faculty superadded to the human corporeal system, but for a distinct substance united to it, and co-operating with it. But metaphysical

natures independent of God himself. If you suppose it modified or mixed in any system, so as to be no longer inert and senseless, it is no longer conformable to our ideas : it is therefore no longer matter, such as it came out of the region of possibility into that of actuality ; it is another substance, and must be called by another name. God cannot make our ideas of incogitativity to be ideas of thinking, nor our ideas of necessity to be ideas of acting freely. To such reasoners it would be, I think, sufficient to say ; learn that human knowledge is derived from existence : and that to be real, it must be conformable to things as they exist. Conform your ideas, therefore, to them, and pretend no longer to control or to determine particular existence by abstract notions. As long as matter is senseless and inert, it is not a thinking substance, nor ought to be called so. But when, in any system of it, the
essential

metaphysical figments impose longer than physical ; because there is more room for WOLLASTON's plea, and because hypotheses may be heaped on hypotheses with less control in one, than in the other.

I MIGHT add, that this figment of a soul, if it be a figment, received strength from the superstitious theology of the heathens. Nothing can confirm and consecrate notions, however erroneous, so much : and this philosophical notion was incorporated into theology from the first. Legislators and magistrates, poets and priests, as well as philosophers, enforced it with all their authority : and the event has been a proof of this great truth, that " the understanding is as subject to the " impressions of fancy, as to those of vulgar notions *."

I MIGHT observe further how little it became WOLLASTON, who would not believe that thinking is a faculty added by the Creator to certain systems of matter ; because he could not reconcile this opinion to his idea of matter, tho' this opinion is conformable to all the phenomena of the mind ; how little, I say, it became him, and must become any other man who reasons in the same way, to urge in defence of all his hypotheses and paradoxes, that many things are by ways which we cannot understand.

BUT I will detain you no longer about such discourse as would convince you, if you heard it at MONROE's, that the philosopher who held it was a patient of the doctor, not yet perfectly restored to his senses.

* BACON.

essential properties, extension, solidity, &c. are maintained, that system is material still, though it become a sensitive plant, a reasoning elephant, or a refining metaphysician. It would be nonsense to assert, what no man does assert, that the idea of incogitativity can be the idea of thinking; but it is nonsense, and something worse than nonsense, to assert what you assert, that God cannot give the faculty of thinking, a faculty in the principle of it entirely unknown to you, to systems of matter whose essential properties are solidity, extension, &c. not incogitativity. This term of negation can be no more the essence of matter than that other immateriality can be the essence of spirit. Our ideas of solidity and extension do not include the idea of thought, neither do they include that of motion; but they exclude neither: and the arguments you draw from the divisibility of matter against its cogitability, which you deny, might be not ill employed against its mobility which you admit, as I suppose.

S E C T. IX.

IT has been said, that this boasted science about soul or spirit has not the merit even of a good hypothesis, tho' it pretends to be demonstrated. You may perhaps begin to think so. But in order to be the more convinced of this, it may not be time mispent to reflect, before we leave the subject, on the sole means we have of acquiring any knowledge of this kind, and to consider how far these means can carry us in the enquiry.

THAT all our knowledge of corporeal substance must be founded in the experience we have of our own, and in the experiments and observations we are able to make on other bodies,

dies, will not be denied in the present state of philosophy. As little can it be denied, that all our knowledge of soul or spirit must be founded, to be real, on what every man may know by intuition of his own soul or spirit; for we cannot contemplate other souls, as we can other bodies. Hypotheses may be made about either, but they must be made in both cases under the same restrictions. When they are designed only to amuse the mind with a sort of analogical appearance of probability, and pretend to be nothing more than physical and metaphysical romances, they are surely very innocent, and employ our time better at least than most of our other amusements do; and yet even then they must contain nothing that is absolutely repugnant to the phenomena. But when they take a more serious air, when they pretend to be founded in some knowledge and to lead to more; and, above all, when they pretend to be not so much hypotheses, as demonstrated systems; it is not enough that they be barely reconcileable to the phenomena. The phenomena must confirm them; or they must be rejected, on what authority soever they come recommended. Authority has been extended very far in theology and philosophy from the time when these names were first assumed, and perhaps long before. PLATO having spoke in that Pythagorical rhapsody, the *Timæus*, about the visible gods, the gods made to be seen, "*qui tales geniti sunt ut cernantur*," that is, the celestial phenomena, he proceeds to speak of Dæmons, that is, of invisible spiritual natures: but of these he confesses himself unable to speak on the strength of his parts, or on his own knowledge; for which reason he has recourse to tradition, and to the authority of the antients, who were born of gods, and knew their parents extremely well. "*Priscis itaque viris in hac re credendum est, qui diis geniti parentes suos optimè noverint.*" These men we must believe, he says, tho' the things they have delivered down be not

not confirmed by conclusive nor even by probable reasons. "Licet nec necessariis nec verisimilibus rationibus eorum oratio confirmetur." On such respectable authority did the divine PLATO vend, to his own and to future ages, all the mysterious nonsense that PYTHAGORAS and he had imported from the Egyptian and Eastern schools of theology and philosophy. But if this might be borne in a theology that pretends to be revealed, and ought to be submitted to in one that proves itself to be so, it is intolerable in philosophy; for in all the parts of that, in the very first, in natural theology, human reason, that is, common sense, is the sole judge; and the greatest doctor has no more right to impose his authority on me, than I have to impose mine on him. I do this justice therefore to PLATO; I do not believe he was in earnest, when he set the example: though I believe that many great divines and metaphysicians have been in earnest, when they have followed it.

IF men had consulted the phænomena of their own minds alone, which can alone afford us any means of acquiring knowledge of spirit or thinking substance, instead of hearkening to such idle traditions, and raising chimæras of their own upon those of other men; if they had proceeded in the analytic method from particulars to generals, as far and no farther than the former justified the latter; it seems to me that they could scarce have imagined the substance of soul absolutely distinct from that of body; nor have created an habitual reverence for an opinion so ill founded in appearances. They have pursued another method, which has brought them, after two or three thousand years, to this paradoxical dilemma; they must either maintain the hypothesis of two distinct substances, and explain in some tolerable manner, which they have not yet done, the union and mutual action on one an-

other of unextended and extended beings; or they must deny the absolute existence of any thing extrinsic to the mind, and maintain that God did nothing more, when he created the world, than give a relative existence to things; that is, make objects perceptible to his creatures which had existed eternally in the divine, and acquired then a new existence in the human mind, but had no other; that he created finite spirits, in short nothing else, spirits to perceive, but nothing to be perceived, except his eternal ideas; that there is no material world, but that the intellectual world is made perceivable by us, according to an order that God has established. Was I obliged by the terrors of an inquisition to embrace one of these two hypotheses, I confess freely that I would embrace the last, strange as it is, as the least inconceivable in itself, and the most convenient in its consequences. But the method taken to frame them revolts me against both.

THIS method we find recommended very emphatically in several places, and on several occasions, in the works of PLATO: and I chuse to give it you, or at least some general notion of it, according to the exposition of MARSILIUS FICINUS*, his best interpreter and commentator. First then, of bodies there are several sorts, æthereal, that is, celestial, æreal, such as ghosts wear; and terrestrial, such as we wear during our lives. We cannot have experimental knowledge of the two former; and experiment and observation are not proper means of arriving at knowledge even of the latter. Corporeal objects dim the sight of the soul: to know them we must look off from them, and must not expect to discover any truth concerning them, unless we have recourse to the ideas of things. “*Nisi ad ideas confugiamus.*” Of souls in the next place, it is extremely hard to know the substance

* MARSIL. FIC. *argum. Phæ. & alibi.*

stance in this life, because we perceive it, "sub corporeâ specie," under a corporeal appearance, and are apt to think in a corporeal manner. The surest way therefore to comprehend it, is to proceed by moral purgation, and metaphysical abstraction. "Ideoque tutissimam rationem ad animam comprehendendam esse tum moralem purgationem tum metaphysicam abstractionem." And if all this will not do, some revelation is necessary, "opus est divino quodam verbo." One would think however, that it should do; since by intenseness of meditation a philosopher may abstract himself from his senses and his imagination, according to PLATO, and employ his mind wholly about incorporeal natures and ideas to which it becomes united by this abstraction; and since in this state he alone has wisdom and knowledge, though being as it were out of himself, extra se "positus," he is laughed at by the vulgar as a madman. You smile perhaps; but, reflect a little on the systems (so we will call them civilly for once) of some modern philosophers about body as well as spirit, on their method of reasoning and on the dogmatical language they hold upon subjects the most remote from human apprehension; and you will not think that I do them any wrong in comparing their manner of philosophising with that of the founder of the academy, his mysterious masters the Egyptians, or his enthusiastical scholars the latter Platonists. Let us then leave those, who think themselves able to arrive at superior knowledge by some such methods as these, to be happy in their own imaginations, and let us rather pity than blame them, when they treat our real though imperfect knowledge as a chimæra, and the chimæras of their own brains as real knowledge. But then let these purged, these purified, these illuminated spirits, who have a constant communication by ideas with the supreme spirit, allow us, who have none of these advantages,

nor any conception that they have them, to pursue quietly the acquisition of a little human knowledge by human means.

WE have clear and determinate ideas of what we call body by sensation, and of what we call spirit by reflection: or to avoid cavil as much as may be, without giving up common sense, we have such ideas by sensation as the various powers of that substance, called body, are ordained to produce in us, and we have such ideas by reflection as the inward operations of that which we call spirit, be it substance or faculty, excite in us. We are able to contemplate these ideas naked, if I may say so, and stripped of the dress of words. How far then does the contemplation of these ideas carry us towards knowledge, or how high do we rise by it in the scale of probability? That is the only question which a reasonable man, who is content to know, as God has made him capable of knowing, will ask. The answer must be to this effect. Philosophers talk of matter and spirit, as if they had a thorough acquaintance with both, when in truth they know nothing of either beyond a few phænomena insufficient to frame any hypothesis. The atomical system, which LEUCIPPUS took perhaps from other philosophers, which DEMOCRITUS took from LEUCIPPUS to improve it, and which EPICURUS took from DEMOCRITUS to corrupt it, has been revived with great reason. But yet we must not talk of matter as if we knew it in these first elements or principles of it, and abstractedly from all the forms under which we perceive it. These original particles, in which the nature of it consists, and on which the constitution of it under all its forms depends, are far beyond the reach of any analyse we can make, of any knowledge we can acquire. Whether these particles be uniform and homogeneous, or whether they be of different kinds, different even in substance as well as in
size,

size, figure, and other circumstances or accidents, is as much unknown to the proudest dogmatist, as to you or to me. Nay, whether many of these original particles may not be endued with active principles, such, for instance, as cause fermentation in some and cohesion in all bodies, is a point that none of them can determine: and yet one need not scruple to say, that the affirmative may be assumed on better grounds than their hypotheses are, notwithstanding the repeated din of inert, senseless, stupid, passive, and similar epithets, which they ring in our ears whenever they speak of body or matter. Their whole discourse, when they go beyond a few apparent properties, whereof we are fitted to have ideas, and which have been already discovered, is one continued petition of principle, and grows as nauseous, tho' not so mortal, as the crambe of JUVENAL.

BODY or matter is compounded and wrought into various systems before it becomes sensible to us. We behold some that are indeed inert, senseless, stupid, and in appearance merely passive. But we behold others that have vegetative life, juices and spirits that circulate and ferment in them, by which they are nourished and by which they grow. They have not the power of beginning motion, but motion which is renewed in them after it has entirely ceased, and both by causes as material as themselves, continues in them, and they live, and move, and propagate their species; till their frame is dissolved by age or sickness, or some external violence. We behold others again that have animal life, and that go from rest to motion and from motion to rest, independently of any outward cause that determines such effects by a physical necessity in this case, as we observe to be done in the former. We discover, by the help of microscopes, an immense variety of these animal systems. Where they begin, God alone their Creator and ours can tell: and it would
be

be as impertinent to ask this question, as it is to demand what "the degree of fineness, or the alteration in the situation of it's parts, is, at which matter may begin to find it-
"self alive and cogitative *?" They who defend so ill their own hypotheses would do well to be less dogmatical and supercilious when they attack those that seem probable to other men. Wherever these animal systems begin, their beginning and the principles of their composition are alike unknown. All we know is that they are, and all we suppose is that they are material beings to which no Cartesian nor any philosopher, who does not deny the existence of body, will, I presume, object.

As these animal systems come to be more and more sensible to us, and as our means and opportunities of observing them encrease, we discover in them, and according to their different species, or even among individuals of the same species, in some more, in others fewer, of the same appearances, that denote a power of thinking in us from the lowest conceivable degrees of it, up to such as are not far, if at all remote, from those in which some men enjoy it. I say some men; because I think it indisputable that the distance between the intellectual faculties of different men is often greater than that between the same faculties in some men and some other animals.

If now we are to form a general conclusion from all these concurrent phenomena, without any further reasoning about them than such as they justify, what must it be? It must be plainly this, that there is in the whole animal kind one intellectual spring common to every species, but vastly distinguished in it's effects; that tho' it appears to be the same spring in all, yet it seems to be differently tempered, and to have more elasticity

* Rel. of nat. delin. §. 9.

elasticity and force in some and less in others; and that besides this, the apparent difference in the constitutions and organizations of animals, seems to account for the different determinations of it's motion, and the surprising variety of it's effects. If the plain man who has formed these general conclusions, on particular observations and experiments, should be asked the trite question, whether he conceives that matter, however figured or moved, subtilized or fermented, can be pleasure or pain, desire or aversion? To answer truly, I think, he must answer that he cannot conceive matter to be any of these, nor even how a system of matter becomes capable of having any ideas, affections or passions, any more than he can conceive how a multitude of other phænomena can be as he perceives evidently that they are. But that he has pushed his enquiry as far as the true means of enquiry are open, that is, as far as the phænomena can guide him; that he cannot draw any other conclusion from them than this, that all animal systems are material; and that he must content himself with this, unless some other can be drawn from the same phænomena.

THE philosopher is not so content. If physics will not serve his purpose, metaphysics and theology shall. "Ad ideas confugiendum est;" and since the particular phænomena of the whole animal system lead to a conclusion he dislikes, he resolves not to be determined by them, but to reason, without regard to them, from his own abstract ideas; and from these he draws a conclusion as inconceivable as that which he rejects. The plain man owns himself unable to explain how material systems think, tho' their phænomena are so many positive proofs that oblige him to conclude they have this power. The philosopher decides negatively on such proofs as his abstract ideas of matter furnish to him, that no system of matter thinks, that omnipotence cannot any way

way communicate to it the faculty of thinking, and positively that whatever thinks is a simple being, immaterial, indissoluble, and therefore immortal. The plain man has recourse once more to the phenomena, and objects that we must be reduced, if we receive this hypothesis, to assert that other animals besides men have immaterial and immortal souls; or, that no other animal, besides man, has the faculty of thinking. The immaterialist is far from contending for the first: and the materialist cannot admit the latter, in opposition to the phenomena; in opposition to which no hypothesis is admissible.

THERE seem to be but three ways to get rid of this objection. Each of them has been tried, and each of them is a different hypothesis. By one, this knot and a multitude of others are cut asunder very easily; for it consists in asserting roundly that there is no such thing as material systems, nor matter, nor any existence out of mind eternal or created, as we have mentioned already. All observations of the phenomena which suppose such an existence, are therefore deceptions according to this scheme: and it would be ridiculous to attempt proving that other animals, besides men, think, to one who denies that these animals exist, or even that he and the man who should dispute with him exist, in the sense in which existence is universally understood.

As these philosophers take body from men, there are others who not only take thought from the rest of the animal kind, but reduce them to the state of automates or machines. Whether DES CARTES advanced this paradox in good earnest, and really doubted whether other animals had a power of thinking or not, it is impossible to determine. That he should be in earnest it is hard to conceive; since any reasons of doubt which

which he might have in this case would have been reasons of doubt in the case of other men, who may give more, but cannot give more evident signs of thought than their fellow-creatures. But we may persuade ourselves very easily, that MALEBRANCHE maintained the same paradox in very good earnest; since it has a nearer and a more favorable relation to his own whimsies, and to some theological tenets, than is commonly observed. Thus the same thing which happens to liars happens often to men who seek the truth very sincerely; but imagine too lightly that they have found it when they have only made an hypothesis, and that they know things as they are when they only guess how they may be. One hypothesis wants another to support it, that a third, and so on, till philosophy grows to be what it has always been, an aggregate of motley systems, partly real and partly fantastical.

THESE two paradoxes have not maintained much credit in the world. Men continue to be persuaded that there are mountains and rivers, and trees and animals: and I apprehend that this vulgar notion will continue to prevail. Just so they believe still that there is some difference between the parish clock and the town bull; that the shepherd's dog perceives and wills, as really as the shepherd himself; and that the philosopher's horse knows the way to his stable, as well as the philosopher knows the way to his study. They will not be sufficient, therefore, to remove the plain man's objection, and recourse must be had to the third hypothesis which compounds matters a little, and is a little more plausible in appearance, but in reality less defensible than that of DES CARTES: one stands in direct opposition to the phenomena, but the other contradicts itself. The hypothesis I mean, is that which assumes a rational soul in man alone, and a sensitive soul alone in all other animals.

HE who should have read all that has been written on this subject, from ARISTOTLE down to the author of the præ-established harmony, and who should have meditated ever so long on these writings, would find it a very hard task to give a full, and an impracticable one to give an intelligible account of what he had found there; so confused, so obscure is this labyrinth of hypotheses. I shall not set my foot far into it; for philosophers, according to their usual practice, have reasoned and disputed in this case to no other purpose than to render diffuse and intricate what lies in the narrowest compass, and has really no difficulty in it, if we know where to stop.

IN order to avoid that paradox, which some at least of the Stoicians held, and which GOMEZ PEREYRA and DES CARTES renewed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and to maintain at the same time the superiority of the human nature, not only in degree but in kind too, this notion of a sensitive soul has been advanced, or rather continued and enforced; for it descends to us from the same springs from which so many other absurdities have flowed. The distinction between souls and images of souls, "*animæ et animarum simulacra*," might lead to it. But there are other passages in PLATO that favor it more directly. ARISTOTLE spoke less figuratively and more clearly on the subject, for he bestowed sensation, memory, and the passions on other animals, and reason on man exclusively. On this principle the schoolmen and all the peripateticians have proceeded, and it is at this hour the reigning opinion among sound divines. There cannot be however a more unsound doctrine, if extreme absurdity can render it so; for either they who maintain it suppose the sensitive soul to be a middle being between body and spirit, or they do not. If they suppose it so, they suppose it to be neither

extended nor unextended, neither material nor immaterial, and we have no idea of any other substance. If they do not suppose it to be so, they affirm without knowing it, what they mean to deny; for they must admit (unless philosophers have a right to contradict the inward as well as the outward phenomena, and intuitive as well as sensitive knowledge) that the power of thinking, that very power whereof we are conscious, is as necessary to the perception of the slightest sensation as it is to geometrical reasoning. There is no conceivable difference in the faculty or power: the sole difference arises from the degree in which it is, or can be exerted. It has been asked, will you deny the power of God to create a substance capable of sensation only, and not of reason? No man living has higher notions of the divine omnipotence, nor carries them further than I do. An argument fairly drawn from the power of God will determine me at any time and on any occasion; tho' it does not determine these men who insist so much upon it, when they hope to make it serve their purpose by an unfair application of it. I am persuaded that God can make material systems capable of thought, not only because I must renounce one of the kinds of knowledge that he has given me, and the first tho' not the principal in the order of knowing, or admit that he has done so: but because the original principles and many of the properties of matter being alike unknown to me, he has not shewn me that it implies any contradiction to assert a material thinking substance. This now, which implies no contradiction, except it be with their precarious hypothetical ideas, these great asserters of the divine power deny. But at the same time they draw another argument unfairly from this very power, by assigning it as the cause of an effect which does manifestly imply contradiction. It implies contradiction manifestly, to say that a substance capable of thought by it's nature, in one degree or instance, is by it's nature in-

capable of it in another. God may limit the exercise of this power, no doubt, in his creatures variously, according to their different organizations, or to the imperceptible differences that there may be in the atoms that compose their bodies, or by other causes absolutely inconceivable. This happens to other animals: it happens to men, and the largest understanding is limited in the exercise of it's mental faculties. But a nature capable of sensation, that is of perception, that is of thought (to say nothing of spontaneous motion, of memory, nor of the passions) cannot be incapable of another mode of thinking, any more than finite extension can be capable of one figure alone, or a piece of wax that receives the impression of one seal cannot receive that of another.

WE may apply very justly to those who have maintained the doctrine of sensitive and rational souls, and to those who have made new hypotheses concerning them, as well as concerning the apparent reciprocal action of body and mind, what BACON says of the Greek philosophers, "*impetu tantum intellectus usi sunt, regulam non adhibuerunt: sed omnia in meditatione acri et mentis volutatione et agitatione perpetuâ posuerunt.*" It must be confessed that some of the moderns have been guilty of this as well as the antients, and, I think, with less excuse; because experimental philosophy has been more in use, and the means of acquiring knowledge of this kind have been more common in our days. Notwithstanding this, we have seen men of the greatest name neglect sometimes entirely, at their first setting out to enquire into the nature of things spiritual or corporeal, an exact and sufficient observation of the phenomena; and still oftener, contenting themselves with a transient view of particulars, hurry on to general knowledge according to the natural propensity of the human mind, without having this rule, if I
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may say so, in their hands; or else bending it to their abstract notions, instead of squaring these scrupulously by it. It seems that the great author himself, whose censure I have just quoted, does something of this kind in his fourth book of the augmentation of science, where he makes a distinction between rational and sensitive souls. The latter he affirms to be a material substance, "*planè substantia corporea censenda est,*" without perceiving that this cannot be, unless matter can be made capable of thinking. This soul he assigns to brutes, according to the received notion. According to the same, he supposes the rational to be a superior soul in men, without perceiving that the supposition of these two souls is as absurd, as that of an upper and lower part in the same simple and indivisible being. He concludes by hinting that the sensitive soul in man may be considered as confounded with and lost in the rational, "*ipsa anima rationalis et spiritus potius appellatione quam animæ indigitari possit,*" without perceiving that we may just as well confound the rational with the sensitive, as the sensitive with the rational soul, and that if nothing can think which is material, that which thinks in other animals must be immaterial; or if any thing can think which is material, that there is no pretence to conclude that which thinks in man to be immaterial. I am afraid, therefore, that the inquisition which he recommends in this place, and which seemed to him to be almost wanting, "*quasi desiderari videtur,*" must have been pursued on his principles under the influence, not of one, but of all the four kinds of false ideas and notions, the "*idola tribûs, specûs, fori, et theatri,*" which he has named, not without some of the affectation prevalent in his age; and which must in all ages render it hard for truth to enter into the mind, and be apt to disturb the progress of it when it is there.

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THIS hypothesis, and the others of fresher invention, are like the armed men of CADMUS; they kill one another: not one survives the rest. Affectation of superior genius and knowledge has decoyed men, no doubt, into these scenes of fantastical ideas and notions: but it must be confessed, that they have been forced into them likewise, in some degree, both by interest, another interest than that of truth, and by invincible prejudice. There are certain opinions fixed by authority; an authority that deserved no respect in it's original, and that could never have imposed by itself, but one that custom renders sacred, and that acquires by subsequent authorities, and by circumstances foreign to it, an importance, in the whole, or in part, which nothing else could have communicated to it. My lord BACON himself observes to this purpose, and he might have applied the observation to himself on this and other occasions, that the greatest genii have suffered violence in all ages; whilst out of regard to their own characters they have submitted to the judgment of their age, and of the populace: so that time, like a river, has brought down light and tumid error, whilst solid and weighty truth is sunk to the bottom and is dived for by few. Thus the notions that prevail about soul, spiritual substance and spiritual operations and things, took their rise in schools where such doctrines were taught as men would be sent to Bedlam for teaching at this day. Their inward doctrine, for they had two, might be more reasonable, perhaps, but we cannot wonder if that which was taught to a few, and which the few kept secret, was soon lost; whilst the outward doctrine, which was taught to whole nations, and glared with symbols, allegories and parables, or philosophical fables, was preserved. Some of these doctrines are come down to us: and it is probable that they have lost nothing of their primitive extravagance in
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the writings of PLATO, through which they have been conveyed principally ; since there never was a more wild or less consistent author in prose or verse.

IN the confusion of fantastical ideas and notions which the introduction of the Platonic philosophy into christianity occasioned or increased, as I shall shew at large hereafter and on more occasions than one, that of a material soul seems to have prevailed at first ; at least it is certain that the most zealous writers for christianity maintained it, or supposed it. The notion, however, of it's immateriality, was soon and more generally established. PLATO, their great master in metaphysical pneumatics, gave them in his vague and figurative manner of writing sufficient foundation for either of these opinions : and the last seemed the most favorable to that of the immortality of the soul. From that time to this, whoever attacks one is supposed to attack the other, and is clamored against, accordingly, by every one who affects a strict orthodoxy, without observing, or perhaps tho' he does observe, that the opinion of the soul's immateriality adds no strength to that of it's immortality ; nay, that by resting it too much on the former, they weaken the latter, and build on a principle which they can never make intelligible, when they might assume another very intelligible and quite sufficient for their purpose. Now these opinions being thus united, their union being confirmed, by the authority of the whole christian church, and the belief of it inculcated by the process of education, the ideas of immateriality and immortality become so intimately associated in the minds of men, that many can no longer separate them when they commence philosophers ; and that those, who see that if immateriality may be said to imply immortality, it will not follow that immortality, in this case, implies necessarily immateriality, chuse rather to keep terms with error than pass
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for heterodox. Thus prejudice and interest conspire to put philosophers under a necessity of maintaining that the soul is an immaterial being, and, in order to maintain it, of inventing the most extravagant hypotheses. When they have once agreed that twice two make five, they may well assert that twice four make ten.

THE plain man, a much better philosopher in the true sense of the word, keeps out of this confusion; for he pushes his enquiries no further than the phenomena lead him, nor presumes to affirm any proposition which is not suggested and confirmed by them. They do not lead him far in his enquiries about spirit, but they lead him surely. Corporeal nature affords men a fund of knowledge, such as it is, which they can never exhaust. We acquire our first ideas from thence, and by industry and experiment it is in our power to acquire more and to improve this kind of knowledge daily. How much it is so appears in the vast improvements that have been made since experimental philosophy has been cultivated. The plain man will be apt to ask why a proportionable improvement has not been made in that knowledge which is called metaphysical? And I think he will give himself this plain answer, that men have in one case means in their power that are proportioned to their ends in some degree, and that they have them not in the other in any degree, tho' they proceed fantastically as if they had. That there are corporeal natures we have sensitive knowledge. That there are spiritual natures, distinct from all these, we have no knowledge at all. We only infer that there are such, because we know that we think, and are not able to conceive how material systems can think. We are conscious of certain modes of thinking, of certain faculties and operations of what we call mind, and of certain inward emotions which we ascribe to the mind
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and which we call affections and passions. This is some degree of knowledge, no doubt, and it might be improved to conduct better our understandings and our lives too. But then the principles of it, the mental phænomena, are few; and, beyond those that are obvious to immediate reflection, there are none to be discovered. There are neither microscopes nor telescopes to assist our inward sight, and neither geometry nor algebra can be of any real use in this part of natural philosophy: whereas, in the other, the vast scene of corporeal nature, which will never be quite opened, is always opening to human industry. We discover frequently new phænomena, or we correct and improve our former observations: and every step of this kind is an advancement of science. These reflections may serve to explain how it has come to pass that philosophers have made such a mighty progress in the knowledge of corporeal nature, even within little more than a century; whereas their knowledge of spiritual nature is no greater now than it was three thousand years ago, and than it will be three thousand years hence, if the generations of men continue so long.

MEN were conscious, ever since their race existed, that there is an active thinking principle in their composition: and the first reflection they made, as soon as they began to reflect on what passes within them, could not fail to be this, that there is a mutual influence of body on mind which shews itself first, and of mind on body which appears a little later. With this knowledge men of common sense have contented themselves in all ages; whilst philosophers, those men of uncommon sense, have filled their own heads, and the heads of all who have hearkened to them, in every age, with fantastical ideas and notions, on which they have erected hypotheses repugnant to one another as well as to the phænomena.

It would be astonishing, if it was not so common, to see men advance hypotheses sometimes with no regard, and often with very little, to those phenomena whereof we are able to acquire sensitive knowledge alone: but that they should do the same thing in cases, where every man has the same intuitive knowledge of the phenomena, might be deemed impossible; and yet both are true. The distinction between sensitive and rational souls, and the immateriality of the latter, had been long established: and the schoolmen, who spun their cobwebs of philosophy as well as theology out of their own brains, had settled most accurately the bounds of each, when DES CARTES arose: a great genius surely. The French, a little like the Greeks, "*qui sua tantum mirantur*," affect to speak of him as if he had first dispelled the mists of ancient philosophy, and taught mankind both to enquire and to reason. But our VERULAM, as great a luminary as he, perhaps a greater, one more useful certainly in the advancement of knowledge, had appeared before him to dispel these mists and to put the clue of experiment into our hands; to deride contentious logic, and to distinguish, between fantastical and real, the knowledge men had, and the knowledge they wanted, in every branch of human science. The English and the French sun both had their spots: and if they dispelled some mists, they raised others. The great obligation we have to them is, that they set us in the way of discovering their errors, as they had discovered those of other philosophers.

DES CARTES saw what the schoolmen had not seen, that a sensitive soul capable of all the functions and endued with all the faculties that they or their master ARISTOTLE allowed to belong to it, must be capable of thinking by its nature, and therefore in every respect as well as these; and that all their distinctions were without differences, and mere arbitrary

suppositions. If he had stopped here, he had defeated them, and not exposed himself to be defeated in his turn. But it did not become the majesty of his philosophy to leave any thing unaccounted for, how deeply soever hid, to speak like *PLINY*, in the majesty of nature. He therefore assumed two substances, the extended and the thinking substance. But as soon as he had done so, two difficulties presented themselves; one arising from the precise definition he had given of the soul, more obviously at least, if not more strongly, than from the vague notions of the peripateticians; and the other concerning the mutual action of mind on body, and of body on mind, arising as obviously and as strongly from his as from the common hypothesis, which were in effect, as to the rational soul, the same. *DES CARTES*, therefore, thought fit to make two other assumptions; one, that since beasts must either not think at all, or have souls like men, whose essence is thought, they should have no souls at all, but be reduced to be material automates. Such he made them: and such they continue among his disciples, as far as it is necessary they should be such to make his system consistent with that of christian divines. It is, in truth, more favorable to them than their own; for besides other absurdities that attend the notion of a sensitive soul, the perpetual creation and annihilation of so many souls, as all the animals and insects of the world require, was a consequence that formed an objection the more against the notion. *DES CARTES* swept all these souls away at once, and the objection with them. The other assumption that this philosopher made, by the plenitude of his power in hypothesis, was this; that since he had established an heterogeneity between the soul and the body, more absolute than that which there seemed to be whilst a sensitive soul was placed like a middle being between them, and since their mutual operations

on one another became consequently more inconceivable than ever, this reciprocal action should be no longer admitted, however conscious of it men might imagine themselves to be. Volition, for instance, is made by this Cartesian hypothesis the occasional, not the efficient, cause of the motion of body : and the impression of an outward object on our organs is made the occasional, not the efficient, cause of the sensation that our minds perceive. God is the sole efficient cause in all these cases. He acts directly and immediately according to the laws on which he has established this strange union between soul and body. A strange union it must needs be ! and one would be tempted almost to think, that it is indifferent whether the soul resides in the body it is supposed to inform, or any where else : since, united as they are, there is no immediate intercourse between them, nor any other than that which is carried on mediately by the supreme Being, who is every where present, and may therefore be determined to act by a mind on a body, and by a body on a mind, how remote soever from one another. If we speak with the vulgar, with whom it is more reasonable to speak and to think too, than with philosophers, on some occasions, we must say that the death of PYRRHUS was the effect of a tile falling casually on his head. But if we speak with the Cartesians ; we must say that the passing of PYRRHUS before the old woman's window was the occasion which determined God to make her see him ; that on this second occasion, the sight of him, God impressed a sentiment of anger and vengeance on the old woman's soul ; that on this third occasion, the sentiment of anger in the old woman's soul, God moved her arm to throw the tile ; and that on this fourth occasion, the falling of the tile, God broke the skull of this fighting king of EPIRUS. This extravagant hypothesis would provoke laughter, if

it did not provoke horror, as I think it must in the mind of every sincere theist *.

THE makers of hypotheses have not stopped here. LEIBNITZ arose after DES CARTES, and if the second did not equal the first in real, he out-did him and every other philosopher in fantastical knowledge. He rejected the old opinion, that the soul and body are so constituted and so united by God as to influence and to act really on one another. He rejected that
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* SINCE there are those who dogmatize boldly about God's manner of being, and of knowing, it is no wonder that there should be those who dogmatize also about his manner of causing, and about the oeconomy of his providence in the government of the world. When they assume particular providences, the instances they bring are often ridiculous: when they speak in general of occasional causes, the instances of these, which force themselves upon the mind, must needs raise horror in every man who believes a God. These doctrines are impertinent in their origin, and abominable in their consequences. If DES CARTES had not made, on his clear and distinct ideas, and his lively inward sentiment, such definitions as could not be reconciled to the universal experience of mankind, he would have been under no difficulty, except that of owning his ignorance, in a case wherein every other philosopher was not less ignorant than he. But rather than not make a new hypothesis without a sufficient regard to the phaenomena first, and rather than not maintain it even against them afterwards, the supreme Being was brought down, "*sicut Deus in machinâ*," to deliver this puzzled philosopher out of the perplexity wherein he had involved himself. I would not think of God at all, tho' he ought to be always present to our thoughts; I would refuse to acknowledge and adore him in the contemplation of his works, though I do it from the bottom of my heart, much sooner than I would look on him as the immediate efficient cause of every sensation of human minds and every action of human bodies. Shall I believe that it is God who impresses those frantic sentiments of devotion, which an Indian idolater feels on the sight of his idol, and who determines the body of this wretch, on the occasion of these sentiments, to fall under the wheels of the processional car, and be crushed to death? Shall I believe that it is God who moves the arm of a parricide when he plunges a dagger into his father's heart, or that of some low rogue when he picks a pocket? The consequences are horrible: and an hypothesis that should lead to them, even less directly than this of DES CARTES does, would deserve to be rejected with the utmost indignation. Many of the most extravagant opinions entertained by the Heathen were capable of being reconciled to an awful sense of the monarchy of a supreme Being. Such opinions as these cannot be so: and Christian philosophers and divines have done more to debase our notions of this Being, than all the doctors of polytheism.

of the French philosopher likewise, which has been just mentioned. He did not prostitute the divine agency by making God the immediate efficient cause of every effect that body seems to have on mind and mind on body, as they happen in the human system. But he employed the divine power and wisdom in another manner, and once for all as it were. According to him, every soul has a certain series of perceptions, desires, volitions, &c. Every body a certain series of motions that are determined by the mechanical dispositions of the machine, combined with the various impressions of outward objects that may be made on it. I do not enter into the difference he makes between the human system, and the general animal system in which he supposes that the same souls have been united to the same organized bodies from the creation, and that these animals do not, properly speaking, die. In the respect in which I quote this wonderful hypothesis here, the case of all these systems is the same. In every one of them the soul and body do not correspond because they are united, but they are united because they corresponded by a pre-established harmony antecedent to their union, and in which LEIBNITZ found, no doubt, that sufficient reason, which is in all cases the reason that the hypothesis requires. Soul and body are united like two tallies that fitted one another before their union; but with this difference, which makes the metaphysical case the stronger, they were so fitted separately and independently of one another. BOUNCE felt pain when she was kicked, if BOUNCE was ever kicked: and so she would have felt it, if she had had no body at all in the same moment. A fair day invited you to walk in your garden; BOUNCE galloped after you: and so you both would have done, if you had had no souls at all. This hypothesis gives me no horror: and every time it comes into my thoughts, I laugh as if I was at a puppet-show.

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THAT of father MALEBRANCHE must not be forgot in this place. It stands between the other two in one respect: it is neither so horrible as the first, nor so comical as the last. But it is I think the strongest instance that can be produced of a fine genius wrought up to a degree of madness by metaphysical speculation and hypothetical enthusiasm, unless the African bishop St. AUSTIN may be compared with him. MALEBRANCHE then specifies certain manners in which we may have ideas of outward objects, the first of which is agreeable to the phænomena and to the common notion derived from them, and the last of which is his own wild hypothesis. He even ventures to assert that there is no other manner in which we can have ideas of these objects. The assertion is a bold one; since it assumes that God cannot ordain any system of body and mind which we cannot comprehend. On this foundation he proceeds to shew how insufficient all the other ways are of accounting for these ideas, and to introduce his own. If I was to enter into a detail of particulars, it would be easy to shew, with the help of Mr. LOCKE's examination, and even without this help, that the hypothesis consists of little else than words that have absolutely no meaning, than figurative expressions that cannot be applied to his subject without the utmost absurdity, than inconsistencies and palpable contradictions. But I believe this will appear to be no unjust charge, even by the very little I shall say. His hypothesis in short is this. We cannot perceive any thing that is not intimately united to our souls. Our souls are unextended beings in this place, tho' in another he says they have extension, a narrow one indeed; but narrow or broad it is still extension. Now there being no proportion between the soul and material things, these cannot be united to it, nor consequently be perceived by it. Our souls are indeed united to our bodies; but there is a manner of
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union necessary to perception, and another not so, neither of which is explained. God, who is a substance, and the only intelligible substance, is intimately united to our souls by his presence. He is the place of spirits, as space is in one sense the place of bodies: and since he must have in himself the ideas of all the beings he has created, (for without these ideas, that is, without our manner of knowing, this philosopher presumes to affirm that he could not have created them) we may see these ideas in God, as he is pleased to shew them to us: but the good father having nowhere explained how God shews them to us, he leaves us in the same ignorance in which he found us. It has been observed that this hypothesis bears some resemblance to that of DEMOCRITUS, who assumed that our ideas are God. One idea, that which we have of God, is, I am sure, by this hypothesis, God himself; since it is affirmed that this idea is uncreated. The words are worth quoting. --- “ On ne peut pas concevoir que l'idée d'un être infiniment parfait, qui est celle que nous avons de Dieu, soit “ quelque chose de créé.” I might mention a multitude of other notions quite unintelligible or repugnant to our clearest ideas and most certain experience; such as these, for instance, that we have the idea of infinite before we have the idea of finite, and that we think of all being before we think of any particular being; but I have said enough to shew that although this writer has destroyed the intentional species of the peripatetics, (for he dwells chiefly on our ideas of sight) yet he has left it just as possible, and vastly more probable, that God has ordained certain ideas in the mind to be excited by certain motions of body, in a manner incomprehensible by us, than that we see these ideas in his substance in a manner alike incomprehensible.

I IMAGINE that the plain man is by this time pleased to see common sense force men back, after a tedious round of philosophical

sophical rambles, to the very point from which he has never stirred ; for so it must do unless we renounce this gift of God, in favor of human authority. The authority may be great ; but the greater it is the more strongly do these examples of error shew how little the greatest, how absurd the wisest, how ignorant the most learned of men become, when they presume to push beyond the bounds that God has set to human enquiries. There is so much warning given, the high road to knowledge is so direct, and the bounds of it are so strongly marked, that they who go out of this road in the vain hope of passing them by a shorter way, as well as they who do not stop when they are conducted no longer by the phænomena, but hope that metaphysics can carry them forward when physics cannot, are inexcusable.

Fontenelle, in the eulogy he made of Newton before the French Academy, compares Des Cartes with him. He says that "Des Cartes, taking a bold flight, meant to place himself at the source of all things, and to make himself master of the first principles of them by some clear and fundamental ideas, that he might have nothing more to do than to descend from thence down to the phenomena of nature as to necessary consequences. He says that the other, more timid or more modest, set out leaning on the phenomena, that he might by their means remount to the unknown principles of things, which he resolved to admit whatever the chain of consequences shewed them to be. One, says he, sets out from what he understands clearly, to find the cause of what he sees. The other sets out from what he sees, to discover the cause, be it plain or obscure. He concludes by saying that the evident principles of one do not always lead him to the phenomena such as they are, and the phenomena do not always lead the other to principles evident

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“ enough.” I have quoted this passage at length ; because, as much perplexed as it is by an artful abuse of words, it will serve much better to set in a full light the truth I would inculcate, than to constitute an equality of merit in natural philosophy between DES CARTES and NEWTON. I will make, therefore, a short commentary on it. The design of the former, as it is here represented, was not a bold flight, but an extravagant undertaking. It is honor enough to the latter, that he made greater advances towards the first principles of things than any of those who went before him : and this would have been honor enough for DES CARTES too, if he could have acquired it. This philosopher might have clear ideas ; for ideas that are false may be very clear perceptions in the mind, and especially in the mind of one who reasoned on a certain lively inward sentiment of evidence, as well as on ideas really clear and distinct. But fundamental ideas, if there be any meaning in the word, he could have none, or none that were sufficient in the method he pursued. Many of those he employed to make himself master of the first principles of things could be only hypothetical, since he did not frame them on the phænomena, nor connect them by the phænomena, according to NEWTON’s method ; which was not timid, but wise as well as modest. What an immense distance was there between any thing he could understand clearly in his method, and the causes of what he saw ? And how could the intermediate ideas be framed ? Nay, how does it appear that he understood clearly the things which he is said to have understood so, and from which he set out, when he took extension alone to constitute the essence of matter, and thought alone that of soul ? Is it not plain that his evident principles were assumed, as they often are, purely for the sake of what was to follow ? DES CARTES might in his method invent, as he did, whatever principles imagination suggested to him, and with the ostentatious appearance

of a complete system shew us an universe of his own, not of God's making. NEWTON resolved to invent none; for he resolved to admit such only as he should be led to discover by a chain of consequences that carried him up to them, imperfectly perhaps but surely; such as God made them to be, not such as he guessed they might be. The one might and did fall into error. The other could only fall short of the knowledge he sought. He fell short of it. Like COLUMBUS, he discovered a new world: and like him, he left the discovery to be pursued by others. Our knowledge of nature can so little be complete, that the very appearance of a complete system is a reason perhaps to suspect it of being etched out by fancy. Let us suppose a philosopher to arise and to pursue the discoveries of NEWTON with equal success. Let us suppose that, by dint of experiment and geometry, he confirms the doctrine of attraction or gravitation not as a property, not as an attribute of matter if you will, but barely as a new phenomenon, and that he discovers a new kind of pulsion or some other physical cause of it. Attraction, which gives us now the idea of a cause, and which may be, notwithstanding all the silly abstract reasoning to the contrary, a real property of matter, will give us then the idea of an effect, as this new cause must do in its turn as soon as some further cause is discovered; and as that further cause must do likewise as soon as some other still more remote is brought into light. Thus we shall be always seeking, and always to seek. But is this to recal the occult qualities of the schools? FONTENELLE makes himself, not NEWTON, ridiculous, when he does more than insinuate this reproach in the same elogy. If NEWTON's philosophy had terminated, like that of the scholastics, in occult qualities, it would not have risen in reputation as fast as it was understood: and if that of DES CARTES had not been too often, like theirs, merely hypothe-

tical and extravagantly so, it had not been demolished on so many sides as fast as it was examined.

BUT I return to observe, that the comparison between these two methods is to be applied to our researches about spiritual as well as corporeal nature, and to confirm what I have said concerning them. When I consider how little knowledge the phenomena give us of one, and that we are not able to go by their help a step beyond the first appearances, whilst we extend our knowledge of the other wider and carry it higher in the order of causes; I am ready to think that God, who leaves us in many cases to collect his will, as he has made us able to collect it, from his works, shews manifestly in this case how repugnant it is to the designs of his all-wise providence that we should attempt to acquire knowledge of soul or spirit, and how conformable it is to these designs that we should employ our industry and penetration to acquire knowledge of body, terrestrial and celestial; in order to promote in general the advantages of human life, and those particularly that result from an adoration of the supreme Being in a contemplation of his works.

It has been said, it is a common-place topic, that Infidels, for such is every one called by some men who does not subscribe to all they advance even without proof, are desirous to keep God at a distance from them, whereas they ought to consider that it is "in him they live and move and have their being." This charge cannot be laid justly against any man who believes a God; for a God without the attributes of an all-perfect Being cannot be the supreme Being, how inconsistently soever some of the antients might reason about the Divinity. For my own part, I am firmly persuaded that there is a supreme Being, the fountain of all existence, by the efficacy

efficacy of whose will the whole universe was made and is governed as well as preserved ; in a word, who is the first efficient cause of all things, and on whom all his creatures depend. But for this very reason, and because I have this awful sense of the supreme Being, I do not presume to familiarize myself with him, as the men who bring this charge are apt to do. That he is the first efficient cause, I acknowledge ; but I am on my guard against those who presume to penetrate further into the machinery of the universe, and the order of second causes, than the phænomena, that is, than his works, shed a light on their enquiries : or who are so bold as to deny the efficiency of second causes, because they are not able to account for them, and who employ the first cause on every occasion, for whose action they are as little able to account. This is a common practice, and it has produced a sort of profane and even blasphemous enthusiasm in philosophy. DES CARTES, LEIBNITZ, MALEBRANCHE, our friend perhaps, and all those who not contented to know, what they may know in some degree, the things that are, make hypotheses of what they can know in no degree, how and why these things are as they are ; all these men, I say, have run into this practice, and have spread the enthusiasm.

OUR enquiries into the nature of things and into their causes may be stopped in two different manners. They may be stopped or delayed by the difficulties that are in the way, or by the want of some of those extraordinary genii that are sent into the world, now and then, to penetrate into the secrets of nature, and to unfold them, as it were, by degrees. Few of these men arise. They are as rare as comets, or any of the less frequent phænomena that they observe : and when one of them has made a certain progress, if he is not interrupted in it by death, it often happens that he stops
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in his philosophical career, as if his strength were spent. The course is long as well as difficult. Relays are necessary, if I may say so, to carry knowledge even to the human goal: and they are not always at hand. When enquiries are thus stopped, and yet the progress that has been made shews that which remains to be made, other men are encouraged to proceed: lucky incidents may happen to shorten their labor, and the intended discovery may seem to be only delayed. This is, I suppose, the case of the longitude: and we cannot doubt but that it is so of many other objects of philosophical enquiry.

BUT our progress is absolutely stopped, instead of being delayed only, in many more instances: and in these it is that all efforts are vain, and all industry for that reason impertinent. I will explain myself on this important point as clearly as I can. Besides the general idea we have of an universal relation of cause and effect between the supreme Being and his works, all the phenomena give us particular ideas of the same relation. It is evidently in the system of divine wisdom that they should do so; and the use of it in all the affairs of human life is manifest. Every phenomenon is a cause to us, when it is considered relatively to those that appear to be the effects of it. Every phenomenon is an effect to us, when it is considered relatively to those that appear to be the causes of it. Thus God has willed that things should be perceived by us: and if we could discover the whole chain up to the first effects of Almighty efficacy, such they would appear, I presume, to us. But humanity cannot soar so high, nor approach so near the throne of God; tho' the sieur DE FONTENELE assures us, that DES CARTES took his first flight thither, at least, since he directed it to the source and to the first principles of all being. As far as we can acquire ideas
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of the phænomena, and are able to compare them, and to proceed by induction from them, so far, and so far only, are we able to acquire the knowledge we are so fond of, the knowledge of causes, of corporeal causes, that I may keep to the usual distinction, from the corporeal phænomena, and of spiritual causes from the spiritual phænomena. When we can acquire no more of these ideas we are at the end of our line of knowledge in either kind: and as this happens sometimes after a long process of enquiry, so it happens sometimes at our first setting out.

BUT this is not all. As our discoveries of the phænomena, by which we acquire ideas of second causes, are thus variously limited, so there is another uniform and universal limitation of our knowledge concerning them. Whatever knowledge we acquire of apparent causes, we can acquire none of real causality, by which I mean neither mode nor modal entity, according to the jargon of the schools, but plainly that force, that power, that virtue whatever, it be, by which one being acts on another, and becomes a cause. We may call this by different names, according to the different effects of it; but to know it in it's first principles, to know the nature of it, would be to know as God himself knows, and, therefore, this will be always unknown to us in causes that seem to be most under our inspection, as well as in those that are the most remote from it. This knowledge, however, is that which philosophers mean to attain, or it is impossible to say what they mean in many cases, and for want of which they employ so familiarly the first efficient cause on every turn. They are doubly ridiculous. They seek and pretend to discover causes when they only suppose phænomena; and when they have discovered a real actual cause in it's effects by the phænomena, they reject it because they cannot conceive it's causality,

sality, nor assign a sufficient reason why and how it is as it is.

IF all the objections to NEWTON's system were answered; if the facts and calculations were over and over confirmed, a disciple of LEIBNITZ would still maintain that there was no sufficient reason for attraction as an essential property, or as an attribute of matter: and that it could not, therefore, be admitted as a cause, how much soever appearances might favor such an opinion; since nothing must be admitted to exist unless philosophers are able to shew the sufficient reason of it's existence, and to explain it's causality. Well might attraction be exploded by these philosophers, since extension itself run some risque, and had been certainly denied to be an essential property of matter, if LEIBNITZ had not discovered the sufficient reason of it in non-extension. His monades in this system may be called immaterial atoms, as properly as he calls souls immaterial automates in his system of a pre-established harmony: and his reasoning in both will appear intelligible to none but his implicit disciples; as his letter to the chemists who searched for the philosopher's stone at Nuremberg, which procured him admission into their society, was intelligible to them, tho' he did not understand it himself.

IT will be agreed, I think, that, on the supposition I have made above, attraction would pass, in every mind untouched by the delirium of metaphysics, for a sufficient cause; tho' the sufficient reason of it could not be given, nor the causality of it be explained. Now I would ask whether the conscious knowledge we have of the reciprocal action of body and mind be not founded in greater certainty than the knowledge we should have of this *conatus accedendi*, this mutual tendency of body to body? It must be allowed to be so. I would ask, therefore,

since he who should deny in this case the attracting, gravitating power to be a property of matter would deserve laughter instead of attention, as much as he did whilst he doubted in the same manner of extension, till the sagacious LEIBNITZ had found the sufficient reason of it in non-extension, or rather in non-entity; I would ask, I say, what he deserves who denies the reciprocal action of mind and body, because he knows no more than that there is such an action, and because he is unable to discover by what powers, and in what manner this action is produced?

IF we are conscious that we think at all, we are conscious that we perceive ideas, and that we will actions. We are conscious, in one case, that the cause is without us, and the effect within us. We are equally conscious, in the other, that the cause is within us, and that the effect passes without us. In one case, where we have only a sensitive knowledge of the cause, tho' we have an intuitive knowledge of the effect, we may be deceived as to the former. The stick in the water may be strait, though we perceived it crooked: and the tower at a great distance from us may be square, tho' we perceived it round. I chuse these trite examples which have been employed by all those who would persuade us to distrust our senses, those inlets of all our knowledge, and which prove for me, on this occasion, better than for them on the occasion on which they urge them. We try our perceptions over and over again; we rectify by experience the deceptions to which they are liable: and all these perceptions, the false as well as the true, confirm the opinion, if it may be called merely an opinion, that they are caused immediately by outward objects acting on our organs, whether we will or no, in consequence of particular principles or powers utterly unknown to us, and conformably to general laws, some of which

we are able to discover. In the other case, where we have intuitive knowledge of the cause, and only sensitive knowledge of the effect, either we have really no knowledge at all, and our whole system is a system of illusion which it would be surely impious to assert; or we know that there is an immediate action or influence, which amounts to the same, of mind on body. No man in his senses ever doubted, and I am therefore persuaded that DES CARTES did not doubt, that volition, an act of the mind, determined the motion of his arms and legs whenever he moved them; tho' the interest of his hypothesis, which concerns all these men much more than that of truth, obliged him to maintain the contrary, as it obliged him to advance the other paradox mentioned above concerning animal automates.

Thus have philosophers in all ages amused mankind with systems of imaginary knowledge, raised on fantastical ideas and notions, rather than confine themselves within the limits of real knowledge. Instead of fixing our opinions by evident truth, and giving the mind any solid foundation whereon to rest, they have involved us in doubts, and eternized dispute. Like NOCTAMBULES, they have staggered about, and jostled one another in their dreams. Since the torch of experimental philosophy has been lighted up, these hypothetical reasonings have been exploded, or else confined under certain conditions in all that relates to corporeal nature. But the abuse has continued in all that relates to spiritual nature: and modern philosophers, like tyrants driven out of one province, have made themselves amends, as it were, by exercising a more arbitrary power in another. The exercise of it in this deserves, however, to be restrained more than in the former. The spiritual nature of our souls, such as it is now conceived to be, such as authority, and among others that of a council,

council, obliges that it should be taught, is an hypothesis assumed on very precarious grounds, and in opposition to those that are the grounds of every other allowable hypothesis. How absurd, therefore, is it in philosophers to assume on an hypothesis much more than they would venture to assume on real knowledge? How absurd is it in the rest of mankind to give any credit to them when they do so?

But there is a further objection to this proceeding drawn from the unavoidable consequences of it, which should render it odious to every man, who will not sacrifice the integrity of theism to the artifice of minds fraught with vanity, and stimulated by curiosity. The notion, which these metaphysical reasoners have framed about the human soul or spirit, makes them slide easily and almost necessarily into that familiarity with the father of spirits which has been censured above, into conclusions little less, if at all less, than blasphemous. Whilst philosophers talked of corporeal nature logically, that is, improperly, or on supposed principles of matter and motion, that is, ignorantly, they led themselves and others into error, but not into such error. Metaphysicians and divines have this to answer for. Spirit is not certainly an univocal term, tho' these men use it as such. God is not a system of matter; but he is not therefore a spirit, such as we conceive spirits to be: he is not therefore united to our souls by an inconceivable presence or union, nor even by any gradation of spirits up to him; for between him and the highest created being the distance must be still infinite. Thus we should think and speak of God. But the men we have to do with here have accustomed themselves to think in the same manner, and to speak in the same stile, of the divine and human spirit, with no other difference than that of adding infinite to the one, and finite to the

other. They conceive them both to be alike immaterial beings, and substances too, as if they, or DES CARTES, who determined that there are but two substances, knew this any better than SPINOZA knew that there is but one, or than I, who believe there may be several, know how many, or what they are. It is no wonder that such notions of a community, or union of spirits between God and man, should encourage metaphysicians and divines to draw the Deity down to their level, as their several hypotheses require, whilst they affect to raise themselves up to his, if I may be allowed to use expressions which are no more than proper to signify their attempts. They do in effect spiritualize all the gross conceptions of ignorant and superstitious men, that is, they say much the same things in a less intelligible manner: and the presence of God, according to MALEBRANCHE, and according to MOSES, differs in little else. Besides which, if we believe what they affirm, MALEBRANCHE had in the Word, or God's eternal reason, an invisible, and the high priest of the Jews in the tabernacle a visible Shecinah to interrogate.

AFTER all these reflections which I have thrown upon paper, as they occurred to my thoughts, and as the frequent interruptions to which I am exposed would give me leave, nay, after all those which they suggest, or which a man of better parts, more knowledge, and more leisure, would be able to make, I doubt not but our plain man would be told that the hypotheses which have been mentioned deserve much respect, notwithstanding all that has been said against them, since they were intended to support the opinion of the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and by consequence of the rewards and punishments of a future state, which are the great bonds that attach men to revealed religion. This he would be told, and he would be asked whether he presumes to deny the truth of these

these doctrines in general, whatever he may think of some particular notions that philosophers may have entertained concerning them? His answer might be to this effect, that it would be for the interest of these and several other doctrines to let them rest on the authority of revelation; that to make them matter of philosophical speculation is to make them disputable, and that to make them disputable is to unfix them in the minds of men; since in the natural order of things revelation may confirm what philosophy teaches; but philosophy can give no confirmation, nor any further authority to what revelation has taught; and since, if it could do so in other cases, it could not do it in these, where questions that have been controverted in all ages among philosophers are concerned. He might add that, revelation a-part, he saw no positive nor determining proof of any of these doctrines; that all the phænomena from our birth to our death seem repugnant to the immateriality and immortality of the soul, that he is forced to conclude with LUCRETIVS,

“ ——— gigni pariter cum corpore, et unâ
 “ Crescere, sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem.”

that God had given him reason to distinguish and to judge, and external and internal sense by which to perceive and to reflect; but that this very reason shewed him the absurdity of embracing an opinion concerning body and mind which neither of these senses supports; that how short and imperfect soever the knowledge acquired by observation of the phænomena might be, he was contented with it, because it was knowledge acquired in God's way, that is, in the only way God has opened to our enquiries about the nature of things corporeal or spiritual: nay further, that if he could suspect himself to be deceived in this way, he would be contented still; he would conclude on this and other occasions, that whether
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things appear to him as they are absolutely, and such as the supreme intelligence knows them to be, or not, they appear to him such as it is fit for his nature that they should appear to him. On this undoubted truth he would rest his mind, instead of perplexing it about indeterminable questions, and of struggling presumptuously and vainly to know things otherwise than his nature and theirs admit that he should know them.

ON such principles as these, tho' he could not affirm, he would not deny, the immortality of the soul. What indeed should tempt him to do so? In whatever world, in whatever state he is, he knows that the same God governs. What then has he to fear in one more than in another? Nothing surely, if he thinks as he ought to think of the all-perfect Being. Such God is. Let us not therefore humanize him. Let us not measure his perfections by ours, much less let us ascribe to him, as every system of theology does, under the notion of goodness, what would be partiality, nor under the notion of justice what would be cruelty in man. Let us not presume so much as to ascribe our perfections to him, even according to the highest conceptions we are able to frame of them, tho' we reject every imperfection conceivable by us, when it is imputed to him. "As we must not imagine
 " with the Anthropomorphites (it is MALEBRANCHE * who
 " speaks well in this place, though very inconsistently with
 " what he says in others,) that God has the human figure,
 " because it seems to us the most perfect; we must not think
 " neither that the mind of God has human thoughts, nor
 " that it is like to ours, because we know nothing more perfect than our own minds." Such theology as this, and surely it is orthodox, makes our plain man to be flattered, not

* Lib. 3. p. 2. c. 9.

terrified,

terrified, with any faint appearance of immortality in prospect, like TULLY, SENECA, and other philosophers, who saw no more grounds in any thing they knew of the nature of the soul for this expectation, than he sees. He is ready to say of this immortality, what the auditor says in the first Tusculan disputation, "*me verò delectat; idque primum ita esse velim, deinde, etiam si non sit, mihi tamen persuaderi velim.*"

HE might very reasonably ask the metaphysical divine for what reason he clogs the belief of the soul's immortality with that of its immateriality, since the former is sufficient to answer all the ends of religion? The doctrine of future rewards and punishments (which is, no doubt, a great restraint on men, and which would be a greater, if it was not so scandalously abused by the ambition and avarice of priests) supposes the immortality of the soul only: and it is much more easy to make men conceive that it is immortal by the good pleasure of God, tho' material, than that it is an immaterial spirit, and immortal by the necessity of its nature, as God is self-existent by the necessity of his. One may wonder that men, who have adopted so many of the whimsical notions which they found in PLATO, should not have borrowed an hint that they might have found there, or that they rejected perhaps when they found it. The hint I mean is, that of souls mortal by their nature, that is, material, but such as should never die. "*Solubiles, sed dissolvendæ nunquam.*" "Since you are generated, you are mortal, but you shall not die; for my will is strong enough to repair the defects of your nature," says the supreme Being to the younger gods, the gods born of gods in the *Timæus*; and it is the least absurd thing PLATO makes him say or do on that occasion. The neglect of this passage may be imputed to some theological purposes that seem to be better served by the hypothesis of immaterial souls, than by any other. But the
vanity

vanity of the human heart, which has been flattered by divines in all ages, was to be flattered on. What served best to this purpose was taken from PLATO: and how it was improved we need look no further than the Tusculan, just now quoted, to find. There TULLY, after a ridiculous panegyric on the human mind, which improved by philosophy he thinks able to discover all things in heaven and on earth, all that exists, in it's beginning, progression, and end, runs a very profane parallel between the divine and human mind. If the first "be air or fire, such is the last." If there be a fifth element, that new nature which "ARISTOTLE first introduced, it must be common to both. Whatever has "sense, intelligence, will, and the principles of life, is celestial and divine, and therefore necessary and eternal." This is the nature of man: and "God himself cannot be "conceived any other way," than by analogy to it. That we frame our conceptions of the divine intelligence as well as we can, by analogy to our own, is true. We have no other way of framing them. But it will not follow that his nature is analogous to ours, nor that ours is like his, "*Mens soluta quædam et libera, segregata ab omni concretione mortali, omnia sentiens et movens, ipsaque prædita motu sempiterno.*" Thus absurdly however did the disciples of PLATO flatter human nature: and, finding in the bible that we are made after the image of God, our divines have interpreted the passage according to these prejudices. They will not say directly, I suppose, that our souls are a portion of the divine essence, but what they say sometimes means this or nothing, and what they say always is but little different from it. Strange vanity! as they assume themselves to be exposed to eternal damnation, and the rest of mankind to be almost entirely damned, rather than to assume that their souls are immortal; so this immortality would not have charms sufficient for them, if it was not asserted to be essential to the nature of their souls.

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THUS, I believe, our plain man would leave the matter: and thus I leave it too; having said, I hope, enough to shew that the fondness philosophers have to raise hypotheses that cannot be raised on real ideas, such as have a known foundation in nature, that is, a known conformity with existence, is a principal occasion on which the mind exercises its artifice in framing such ideas and notions as are merely fantastical. That the mind exercises the same several other ways, and in some less obviously than in this, as it has been hinted above, I know full well. But, enough having been said to shew that human knowledge is imperfect and precarious in its original, as well as slow and confined in its progress, and by one great example, which may serve instar omnium, that they, who pretend to guide the reason of mankind and to improve human knowledge, do nothing better in matters of the first philosophy, than substitute that which is imaginary in the place of that which is real, or in addition to it, in favor of their prejudices, their passions, and their interests; enough has been said for an essay concerning the Nature, Extent, and Reality of Human Knowledge.

END of the THIRD VOLUME.